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N.P.I.

Peckham

"WINDFALLS GATHERED ONLY FOR FRIENDS"

AND

OTHER POEMS

BY

MARY CHACE PECKHAM

MEMORIAL EDITION

BUFFALO
CHARLES WELLS MOULTON
1894

THE NEW YORK
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PREFACE.

THROUGH the poems in this little volume, a deeply religious nature gave expression to spiritual and ethical aspiration. It therefore makes no appeal to the frivolous. The poems in the first part were arranged by their author, in the order in which they are printed, in the week preceeding her death. The title was also given by her as here printed. With the self-depriciation that was her characteristic, she said these verse had come to her in hours of inspiration and had never assumed the importance of a task. While to her they were very precious, as marking often the stepping stones to wider experiences of life, she could not assume that others could find in them any such value. She therefore gave them to her friends, "as mere windfalls from the tree of life."

She made the list, however, from memory. When the material that she left was further examined it was thought best to add to those she had selected the second part, under the conviction that many, if not all of the poems therein, are in many respects of equal value with those to which her own criticism assigned a higher order of merit.

S. F. P.

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN,
JUNE IST, 1894.

WQR 19FEB'36

CONTENTS.

PART I.

"WINDFALLS GATHERED ONLY FOR FRIENDS."

	PAGE
VALE ET APLAUDITE	13
ILLUSION	15
FINDING GOD	20
GUIDANCE	22
OUTRE MER	24
THE POET AND THE NIGHTINGALE	27
SUNSET	30
COMING	31
TWO TIDES	33
THE POLE STAR	35
THE LOGGER'S WIFE	37
UNEVANGELICAL	39
SOME KATYDIDS	41
A LESSON IN SMILING	43
BOBOLINK'S REPLY	45
DESIRE	47
EASTER LILIES	48
"TO THOSE WHO ARE BEYOND THE RIVER."	53
MY BABY	56
WHY?	58
ELFRIDA	60

CONTENTS.

BUTTERCUP WOOING 62
LOVE'S INVENTORY 63
AN ENDED QUEST 65
LOVE'S ART 67
LINES WITH A BALSAM PILLOW 68
COQUETTISH HELEN 69
CALABRIAN SONGS 71
A CHRISTMAS GARLAND 76
BROTHER ANGELO 78
RENUNCIATION 80
THE POET'S LAW 82
FROM MYTH TO MATERIALISM 84
THE WOOD THRUSH AT SUNSET 86
TO THE WOOD ANEMONE 88
WHERE'S HYLAS? 90

FOUR TYPES OF WOMANHOOD:

ATHENÈ 92
PHRYNE 92
MAGDALENE 93
THE NEW ATHENÈ 94

HAPPINESS 95
EDELWEIS 96
EUTHANASY 97
MILKWEED 98

PART II.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

EARLY POEMS:

A Crocus 101
Mirage 102
The Dreamer 103
Amphion 105
The True Creed 107
L'Envoi 109
"—— and in Prison 110
Benedicite 112
Bright Stars 113
The Daisy 114

CHRISTMAS POEMS:

The Christmas Star 115
Christmas, 1863 117
Christmas at Eisenach 1489–93. . . . 119
Christmas in Merry England 1388–1888 121
1388 121
1588 122
1688 122
1888 123
To my Mother, 1890 124

CHILDREN'S POEMS:

Popped Corn 127
Bunny 130
The Cricket's Court 132

MABEL 135
THE SANDPIPER 137

WOMAN SUFFRAGE POEMS:

THE SHIP OF STATE 139
FELICIA 141

POEMS OF SENTIMENT:

SONG. 147
ON A BATCHELOR'S BUTTON 149
THE PLATTER POEM 151
PROPHECY 156

RELIGIOUS POEMS:

THE DYING TEACHER TO HIS WIFE . . 158
THE PROBLEM 160
TWO LOOKS AHEAD 161
THE GODWARD TIDE 162
THE HEART'S EXCUSE 164
MY FATHER'S HOUSE 166
MAGDALEN 168
A BLADE OF GRASS 170
COMMUNION 171
TO MARGARET 172
SONG 173

"WINDFALLS GATHERED
ONLY FOR FRIENDS."

"VALE ET APPLAUDITE."

AH! me, my mates, why need the poet sing
  When life and death make poets of us all?
    Beside our babies beds immortal Love
  Chants through our lips her early matin call;
    Her lulling even song we hear above
Our answering hearts, when all our journeying
Has brought us to a half remembered shore,—
  A half remembered harmony whose stress
  The poet's harp doth only half confess
And whose refrain is "ever" and "no more."

Forever have we known remorseless Fate
  And ever too that time shall be no more
    And that the heart is stung with stings of fire
  From whence the meanest of us all do pour
    Passion and pain, and hatred and desire,
The epic of the soul; or soon or late,
As enter some weird bard in Celtic hall
  Trembling with prophecy, enwrapt, away
  Lets run the magic of his fiery lay
Of tragic battle, or the liegman's call.

Then, if I sing, or haply I forbear,
  Still will ye know, my mates, the haunting chord,
    Whither triumphant manhood swell the tone
  Or on the sweetness of its first accord,
    Soon fallen, the plaintive minor makes its moan.

Still will ye feel delight, the lift from care,
The dancing Hours will pipe you if *I* fail.
For some, Young Loves will hymn the marriage morn;
For some, the reapers sing amid the corn,
For some, the war song swell its loud "All hail!"

MARY CHACE PECKHAM.

OBIT. MARCH 20th, 1892.

ILLUSION.

For what is Māyā, the mother of Indian Christs, but a name to signify the passion of the soul after the eternal beauty, and the meaning of that name is—illusion.

BENEATH the shadow of the thatch
Half-witted Eddie sits and dreams
Unmindful of the fisher's catch.
His whole world is the garden patch,
His idleness his mood beseams
For all his trade is—wishing.

The fisher-folk are simple, too,
Down on the borders of Cape Ann.
Quoth one, "If half its good you knew,
The sea were church and school for you."
Quoth they, "You must be crazy, man,
The sea is good for—fishing."

So while they call him "witless Ned,"
And leave him in the sun to wish,
He takes, with thanks, the better bread
They leave to souls "unfacultied"
And can not see because of *fish*,
The bread of Nature's giving.

The honeybees their gains rehearse
What time he holds to woo their wings,
The hollyhock's pink hearted purse,

Whose golden coins never curse.
He fellowships with everything
That can not get a living.

And night or day he can not rest
For wishing for the purple hills
That stretch along the distant west
Unknown, unsought and unpossessed;
While all their mystic beauty thrills
His soul past all reposing.

"'Tis there," he says, "the rainbow ends,
'Tis there the evening star anew
Each twilight, when the mist ascends,
Her burning forehead bathes, and lends
A backward pathway for the dew,
The road to Heaven disclosing."

In vain the loungers by the fence
Interpret for the witless child;
"'Tis but a vagary of sense,
Other horizons widen thence."
He shakes his head, still unbeguiled
Of all the sweet illusion.

The skipper looks with envious eyes
On other skipper's stalwart sons;
The mother bakes and brews and sighs,
Until a stranger, counted wise
Among those simple hearted ones,
Seeks shelter and seclusion.

He reads the riddle with a look.
"Your son is not a witless fool,
But one whom kindly Nature took
For foster-child, when ye forsook.
And God, Himself, has put to school
To get a poet's training."

"Good luck! a poet! now, indeed,
A fool were better for my trade!
A fisherman is what I need
And not a gentleman to feed."
So spoke the skipper half dismayed
And half at Heaven repining.

But mother-love the murmur stills:
"What can we do his wits to win?"
"Go! take him to the purple hills,
What time their tops God's glory fills,
And no horizon shuts them in,
And tell the boy that Duty

"Is man's horizon here below
And they who cross its mystic line
Must forfeit all the purple glow
Which makes it shine and succor so;
Do this, or else the boy will pine
And die for lack of beauty."

But fish were dear and whims must wait;
They hid his counsel in their heart,
Sometime before it was too late,

When fishing gains were not so great,
Half-witted Eddie should depart
To find his Heaven a fable.

And so the year wore on apace,
And fishing smacks came home for good;
The garden lost its summer face;
Old skippers by the fire-place
Discussed their pipes and life was rude
By bed, and hearth and table.

And Eddie saw the purple glow
Fade off upon the distant hills;
He saw it fade, and longed to know
That other country down below,
Where winter never brings its chills;
And no one told him duly

Of that great summer of the soul
Which makes the golden year of love;
Of that sweet service and control
Which makes the year one perfect whole,
In sun or frost, for those who are
Christ's knights and liegemen truly.

And idle lay the fisher's hand,
As idle as the dreamer's brain;
Oh! Christ, that in Thy happy land
So few they be that understand!
The singer pauses in the strain
And lingers at the story.

How wistful Eddie stole away,
And in the autumn's later chills
They found his dory where it lay
Awreck,—but those who loved him say
That from the mystic purple hills
The boy stepped into glory.

BRISTOL, R. I., OCTOBER, 1884.

FINDING GOD.

I LEFT my father's house at dawn
To read the great world's mystery;
Life wore the colors of the morn,
And earth looked beautiful to me.

I said, "Why brood for days and days
In childish quiet in the nest?"
The hero goes—the coward stays,
The wise know Life and God the best.

And so I bartered faith for sight,
And questioned earth and air and sea,
To find and answer if I might
The hieroglyph of Deity.

I found His name on everything;
It glowed in sunset's crimson line,
It veined the smallest insect's wing;
All Nature bore His manual-sign.

I saw Him where the violet grew
Among an old oak's sturdy roots;
But neither tree nor flower knew
His essence or His attributes.

Then said I, "Violet, humble worth
Sees deeper than the flesh or sod,
Look up thro' Heaven, look down thro' Earth,
And tell me what and where is God?"

"Ask," she replied, "the birds and bees,
They sing it always in their tune;
But you are not as wise as these,
Because you left the nest too soon.

"Lie down like us and sun yourself,
He broods upon the earth-nest still;
Who closest creep and warmest lie,
Are they who best fulfil His will."

So I lay down,—and grass o'ertopped,
And gave me brother's kiss of grace;
And sister violet softly dropped
Her perfume on my happy face.

Still Nature's subtile chemistry
The odors and the dew distills,
And water turns to wine for me
In purple grape-cups on the hills.

My heart confesses it is sweet
After the cold, the loss the storm,
Simply to feel His great Heart beat,
Simply to feel the nest is warm.

ORONO, ME., 1870.

GUIDANCE.

"Your dæmon shall not choose you, but you will choose your dæmon."—*Plato.*

DEEM not that race of God forgot
Who, searching Time's great cycles through
Dreamed that they chose their earthly lot,
And choosing, chose a genius too.

Eternal thirst, eternal quest
That named the Soul's ideal thus.
Still is the "inner light" our guest
And still the choice remains for us.

Greater than Elusinian rite
The Soul's initiation is.
Man's union with the Infinite,
The mystery of mysteries.

A formless cloud, He broods about
The soul, and gives the guide we will;
Our young ideal leads us out
Upon His green immortal hill.

The dawn flings back her curtained door
Beflecked with rose and amethyst;
The morning stars that stud her floor
Sing out again the song we list,

But once, when like the earth's, the dew
Of our creative morn undried
Betokens that the world is new,
And youth's high hope, unsatisfied.

But nearer than the starry strain
The genius in our heart of fire
Takes up for us their high refrain
And softly sings "Aspire! Aspire!"

Ah! happy who obey the hest
Nor brush the early dew away!
Thrice happy in whose agéd breast
The young ideal deigns to stay!

Nor like a guest, long dispossessed,
Returneth a reproachful shade,
As in the mummy's shrunken breast
The image of its soul is laid.

The semblance of a wingéd thing
Waiting with pionion wide unfurled,
The while the soul is wandering
In darkness of the under world.

Oh! soul, come up and front the light,
And catch the morning's lusty breath!
Thy genius will not bide the night,
Nor thy ideal walk with death.

BRISTOL, Nov. 19, 1884.

OUTRE MER.

In an island of the sea,
  Like a pearl within a shell,
Once a soul, by God's decree,
  Found a home, and loved it well.

There repose eternal palms,
  Circling a palace wall;
And the great sea stretched its arms,
  Like a giant, round them all.

So God willed him to abide,
  Innocent of mortal stain,
Angel browed and holy-eyed,
  With no blight of sin or pain,

Till the human instinct wrought
  Knowledge of diviner things;
And the "Unknown God" he sought
  Through great nature's whisperings.

First the palms stretched out their hands,
  Pointing to the mystic blue;
Then the sea crept up the sands
  With a language strange and new.

Argosies of snowy sails
  Bore strange crews to distant shore;
But no breeze, no favoring gales,
  Brought them back forevermore.

Then deep dread and heavy fears
  Seemed to fill the charmèd air;
Dimmed his sunny eyes with tears,
  Marked his brow with human care.

Passion seared his angel heart;
  Strong temptations, dreadful sin,
Lured him by their subtle art,
  Flesh without and sense within.

Flesh without, but God above,
  For one day the Father smiled;
And in pity sent a dove
  To his weary-hearted child.

Close it nestled in his breast,
  Folding down its snowy wings;
Then it told of love and rest,
  And of deep, immortal things,

Till the soul, with fierce desire,
  Tore away its spotted vest;
Learned to worship and aspire,
  And attained eternal rest.

O my soul, the lesson scan!
  Sure, this island is the world;
And the tempted soul is man,
  On the rocks of passion hurled!

Life, thy island, fast recedes,
  Washed by death's encroaching sea;
Who will answer all thy needs
  Save the God that calleth thee?

Hold thy Dove, my soul, my soul;
  Holy Spirit, stay Thy wings,
Nearer, while the billows roll,
  Thou shalt teach diviner things.

1883.

THE POET AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

Of old when men with human needs
Were fenced from God by musty creeds,
In classic Arno's cypress vale
A poet loved a nightingale.

He shunned the lore of monkish books
To study Nature's loving looks;
She let him lift her inmost veil,
But best he loved his nightingale.

He sang of love and human right
Till souls long starved wept in delight,
And envious priests cried out to know
How he could charm the people so.

"Nay, 'tis not I," he answered then,
"To sing the song of Heaven to men;
My sweetest harmonies would fail,
I learned it of the nightingale."

Then cried the bigots, "'Tis the guise
Of satan to deceive the wise.
Adjure the bird! *Conjuro te!*"
They cried, "the fiend come out of thee!"

But unabashed the nightingale
Perched boldly on their altar rail
And drank, as 'twere his common wont,
The holy water from the font.

At last, condemned for heresy,
They led the poet out to die;
But hatred could not quite prevail—
One friend was true—the nightingale.

Above the stake it hung alone;
The priests cried, "Satan waits his own!"
"Nay," and the poet bowed his head,
"My God has sent a priest," he said.

"Thank God the prophet can not die!"
So passed with that exulting cry,
To Him whose mercies can not fail
The martyr and the nightingale.

Lo! from the smoking sacrifice
A spotless dove was seen to rise
Where the brown nightingale of late
Had seemed to share the poet's fate.

Then some said, who had been his friends,
That the white soul, whose pureness lends
A grace to even common things,
Had cast a glory in its wings.

But others knew the Heavenly Guest
And filled with awe and shame, confessed
In the white dove that upward flew
The Christ they crucified anew.

Howe'er that be, in this I read
A lesson suited to my need;
That all things, great and small, afford
A dwelling for the blesséd Lord.

In creed and text a meaning lurks
Made vital in His living works;
Love, sown like gold, the Gospel through
Is sown in flower and star-script too.

From small things, that confound the wise,
When sage and priest with sealéd eyes
Saw only death and hell erewhiles
The Father's face looks out and smiles.

1869.

SUNSET.

THE children gather at the fence
(The gate swings outward to the west),
And watch the purple hills from whence
The father comes with food and rest.
Their lengthened shadows fall behind,
Their faces glow the while they wait,
To bid him welcome when they find
That father's coming to the gate.

We turn away, when sunset fills
Our valleys with a glory sweet,
And on the green immortal hills,
We catch the sound of coming feet.
Our lengthened shadows fall before;
Our faces darken as we wait;
Ah! foolish children, who deplore
The Father's coming at the gate.

COMING.[1]

ALL my life I keep an inn,
  And for guests, I harbor there
  Faith and Charity and Prayer—
Servants of a mighty King.

All my life I wait for Him;
  Set my doors and windows wide
  That when all is purified,
He, the King, may enter in.

For, so well He loves His own,
  That when perfect beauty waits,
  Straight He enters at her gates
With acceptance most divine.

Royally I spread my board;
  Bread a beggar's breath has warmed;
  Wine expressed from hearts that mourned,
Fed and comforted by me.

At my door the Magdalen
  Suns with love her outstretched palms
  That the King may grant her alms
When He comes to feed us all.

Then my door shall open wide,
  When His footsteps touch the sill;
  Spread and open out until
Clayey beam and lintel falls.

Then no more an humble inn,
  Where His servants sit at meat;
  When the King Himself shall eat,
Deign to sit and sup with me.

All the heaven of heavens shall stand
  Underneath my honored roof,
  And the sun shall keep aloof
For the glory that shall be.

I shall gird myself and serve,
  With a garment white as snow,
  Hiding whiter wings below,
And a star shall lighten me.

All my days I look for Him;
  But till that time come to me,
  Faith and Hope and Charity
Make my heart their hostelry.

TWO TIDES.2

To-day the tide came in once more,
(God's solemn tides that come and go
For death or birth with ebb and flow)
And left a baby at our door.

A thing that might not lisp its past,
Whose rose-leaf hands with close shut palms
Might seem to tell of endless calms,
But keep their folded secret fast.

Down drifted from some sphere of day,
Or struck from matter uncreate,
Like earth in its primeval state,
A soul of-fire encased in clay.

We know not what thou may'st have been,
Or if, above the soul He made,
"Let there be light," the Father said,
We only know—the tide came in.

But at the last we will not doubt;
We will not say when life for thee
Ebbs to the great eternity,
We only know the tide goes out.

If truth shall lighten in thy wake,
  If deed and dream, so long at war,
  Round in thy life to perfect law,
And manhood broaden for thy sake.

Eternity is light about
  The feet that on His errands go;
  Such, God's diviner undertow
Sweeps heavenward when the tides go out.

1873.

THE POLE STAR.

"The inequatities of our atmosphere are supposed to cause the twinkling of the stars."

GOD set a star beneath His feet,
When fair creation's work was done,
Love's final period to complete
The perfect sentence Love begun.

It lit their happy feet who pace
The azure fields above our ken;
Its inward eye beheld God's face,
The outward looked on sinful men.

It hung above the ocean's breast
When sailors dared the stormy main,
Till one more loving than the rest
Beheld its hidden meaning plain.

Nay, what am I, from heaven so far,
Untipped by fire my sluggish pen,
To tell the story of a star
That loved and pittied mortal men.

I only know its inward eye
Looked calm on Heaven's unaltered years;
The outward, saw our misery
And trembled with a thousand tears.

I know that if our common air
  Were pure as Heaven's atmosphere,
The star that shines so calmly there
  Would never seem to tremble here.

I only know another star,
  The Pole of Faith's unchanging sky,
That gleams like Eden's guardian Lar
  To point the homesick soul on high.

It glimmers feebly through the mist
  Of all the faithless prayers we pray,
And will not pilot eyes unkissed
  By touch of love's diviner ray;

But sweeps away the mists between,
  The atmosphere of love restore;
And through that heavenly medium seen,
  That star will never tremble more.

THE LOGGER'S WIFE.

You and I, my love, nestled down
  Close by the willows where all is still,
Watch the loggers go swirling by
  Through the boom (3) to the old saw-mill.
Hard working Felix, with blouse of red,
  Standing with pike pole half poised in air,
Throws off a kiss to his bonny wife
  Over the river, with baby Claire.

Sturdy Felix! with time to spare,
  Spite of toiling, for kisses sweet,
Any moment his luck may turn,
  Like the log that's beneath his feet.
Yet can he laugh to the laughing sky,
  Yet can the bonny wife answer back.
God holds the largess of love to them;
  His purse is great, and they feel no lack.

You and I, my love, tired to death,
  Vexed by numberless petty cares,
Let the blossoms and bliss of youth
  Slip away from us unawares.
Puzzled by questions of faith and fate,
  Pulling to pieces the rose of life,
Talking of "freedom of will" and yet
  Never as free as the logger's wife.

Free to love as a flower to bloom,
  Free to wonder as children may,
Sure the while that the loving God
  Keeps the world in His hand alway.
Glad to be breathing His common air,
  Glad in His sunshine as if He smiled,
Sure of the future by present good,
  And safe by virtue of being His child.

ORONO, ME., 1871.

UNEVANGELICAL.

Kiss me, wife! the lips are colder,
But the soul no whit the older
  Than the day, all days above,
When in pledge of truth new-plighted,
Looking into eyes faith-lighted,
  We kissed warm and close for love!

Love! oh, word of saint and seer!
'Tis the soul's completed sphere;
  'Tis the "all things" joined in one;
'Tis a star whose gravitation
Carries all our "lost creation"
  Round the Lord who is its sun.

"Lost," oh, Oversoul of Fire!
Unto whom our first desire
  Rises like the candle flame!
Shall a pariah defend thee?
Can the cloaks of creed they lend thee
  Price thy loss or save thy fame?

Oh, to see thy lilies growing!
Oh, to mark thy roses blowing,
  Yet believe that *thou* canst be
Maker of a human creature,
Born with no redeeming feature,
  What! what's this but—heresy?

Kiss me, wife! an angel warder
Waits for me beyond the border!
  Death! who called thee stern and grim?
Oh, Key bearer, end my durance!
Let the full heart sate assurance
  With the promised sight of Him.

With a trust that can not falter,
With a love death can not alter,
  With my Father's hand in mine
Let me pass the dreaded portal,
Lose the mortal in immortal,
  Sealed by Death—his manual sign.

But enough! I loved my brothers!
If some pitying hand uncovers
  This poor face they hated here,
Say, this was a happy sinner
Who spelled Love as a beginner,
  In God's book he now reads clear.

SOME KATYDIDS.

BEFORE.

THE Katydids are out to-night
  Their daily question to discuss,
And which are wrong, and which are right
  Remains a question still with us,
My little five year Kate and me,
  "Now mother, what did Katie do?"
"She tried to do her best, may be,
  And loved her mother just like you."

Down dropped the brown eyes at the word
  As if the morning's fault she knew;
"Oh! mother, play I was a bird
  And you asked me if I loved you!"
"And *did* my Katie love me then?"
  Like some shy creature fondly chid,
She dropped her bashful eyes again
  And softly whispered: "Katy did."

AFTER.

The Katydids are out to-night,
  And I proposed their question too.
"Does angel Katy love me quite
  As sweet child Katy used to do?"

Ah! peace awhile! the night were well
  Of their discordant clamor rid!
They quarrel so I can not tell
  If Katy didn't or she did.

Across the street, a step or so,
  The nursery lamps are brightly lit;
And on the curtain to and fro,
  I see the mother's shadow flit.
Oh, empty arms that vainly yearn!
  Oh, empty crib too smooth and white!
Oh, nursery lamp, that would not burn!
  My darling sleeps in Heaven to-night!

Above my head, a step or so
  Beyond the evening's chilly damps,
With starry radiance all aglow,
  All night He burns His nursery lamps
And on the curtain of the sky
  I see His cloudy shadow run,
And hear His wind-sung lullaby
  The while He tends my little one.

But still the hungry heart will yearn,
  And still the empty arms will grope,
And *Heaven* may hardly serve their turn
  Who ask for love, and not for hope!
So Katy, if you love me there
  Your happy, happy days amid,
Step lightly down the golden stair
  And softly whisper: "Katy did."

A LESSON IN SMILING.

ONCE when Life and I fell out,
Thro' infirmity of doubt,
And I longed to be put out
  Like a candle at mid-day;
Sudden in my darkened room,
Stood an angel in the gloom,
Like the one that lit the tomb
  Where the risen Jesus lay.

Spake he not a word, but smiled
Like a mother when her child
Sorely needs to be beguiled
  From some petty misery;
And his smile was like the sun
In the lily's heart at noon,
As if soul and smile were one;
  So it was, or seemed to be.

Spake he not but smiled instead.
"Last years nests are full," I said,
"Fields snow-white are clover-red,
  All but souls renew their green;
Tho' earth spin a million years,
Still her weaving will be tears,
And beyond, no good appears
  Judging unseen things by seen."

Soft he smiled from brow to chin;
"If a mortal look within
How shall Heaven's fair beauty win
To his soul a fresher grace?
Not an angel's self would be
Bright with immortality
Save he earned it steadfastly
Gazing on the Father's face.

"Tho' my place in Heaven be meek,"
(Soft he smiled on lip and cheek),
"If some mightier angel speak
I say—'Glory'—in the pause,
Knowing not his great design,
Happy, if His face may shine
By reflected light in mine,
In the beauty of His laws.

"When an angel smiles above
On the patient tears that prove
How a broken heart can love,
Men say 'Lo! a rainbow shone!'
When a mortal smiles below,
Trusting God thro' joy or woe,
All the fields of Heaven glow,
And a rainbow spans the throne."

BOBOLINK'S REPLY.

If I had a pair of wings,
  Little bird, like you,
I'd not stoop to common things,
  As you often do,
But make haste to sun myself
  In the upper blue.

If I had a song of praise,
  I would never wait,
Wasting it for days and days,
  Singing to my mate,
But rise up and carol it,
  Close to heaven's gate.

"Bobolink," the bird replied,
  "If I had a *soul*,
I'd not yield it up to pride
  And the world's control;
But for God and humankind
  I would keep it whole.

"If I had an angel's wings
  Waiting me, like *you*,
I'd not soil with sinful things
  Their angelic hue,
But take care to keep them pure,
  As the angels do.

"If I had a song to sing
In an angel choir,
Every deed should be a string
For that heavenly lyre,
Till the angels, missing it,
Whispered 'Come up higher.' "

1872.

DESIRE.

Love me, Lord, with heat and light,
'Till I grow as violets do,
A sweet savor in thy sight;
To my lowly mission true
As thy chiefest angel is,
Teaching Heaven's high verities.

Love me as the all-wise can
Love the soul Himself bestows.
Love me as the husbandman
Loves the small brown seed he sows
For the future's priceless meed
In the soul as in the seed.

Speak, oh, Lord, my angel name!
Call it soft as Gabriel's,
Till, drawn upward like a flame,
All my soul in Heaven dwells;
Lapsing, from excess of bliss,
Into that world out of this.

1872.

EASTER LILIES.

ANON the sun arose, whose kiss of fire
The cheek of earth, his mistress, turns to rosy red;
The flowers that wept his loss with fond desire
Looked up that he might drink their tears unshed,
And virgin lilies owned their lord's control,
And blushed like Undine when she found her soul.

For me, down lying in the reedy sedge,
I dreamed of love as pure as lilies know,
When, tripping lightly to the the water's edge,
I saw a group of village maidens go
Wading adown the stream like water-elves
To gather flowers no fairer than themselves.

Seven eager girls whose cheeks might owe their blush,
As erst the lilies did, to lover's kiss;
A rosy Pleiades in youth's first flush—
And one was lost like that fair star we miss,
Lost, for she clasped a babe, a tiny thing,
And yet her finger showed no wedding ring.

Uncrowned she stood, she had dissolved her pearl
In wine of worthless love, and could not wear
Her glowing jewel like a happier girl;
That dread libation left her forehead bare

And pale, as God had touched her brow and lips
And whitened all her life into eclipse.

I pray you pity her, good souls and true.
The ringing laugh came mocking to her ear;
She hugged her baby closer, for she knew
Some words they said were not for her to hear
About true loves, and how the lilies white
Would just be blown for Amy's bridal night.

"He says they're only fit for virgin heads,"
The maiden faltered with a happy blush,
"And he would like to see the girl he weds
Crowned with their peerless purity; but hush!
Here comes poor Mary; what a dreadful thing!
A child, and yet no lover, and no ring!"

"Nay," and her voice rang through them like a call,
"I have a lover and a wedding ring!
A lover true as any of you all,
Whose golden pledge is not as frail a thing
As the love it stands for; though my hand be bare,
My lover's pledge and surety is there."

"Now out upon thee for a shameless jade!"
One answered: "who can pity thee who dare
To boast the lawless conquests thou hast made?
What thinkest thou another man will care
For thy despoiled roses when the hedgerow shows
A score ungathered?" But she said: "He knows

My shameful story, yet He loves me well!
Ah! sweeter fruit no other love-bough bears!
'Twas on an Easter morning this befell;
The lads and you, my mates, were at your prayers.
I, only, in the churchyard, all alone,
Sat nursing my poor baby on a stone.

"It was as if the whole round world were stone,
And I, outside of it, were in its shade
Alone with God—and yet not all alone,
For like a God in radiant youth arrayed
One came near by and touched the nursing child,
Whereat the little one looked up and smiled.

"I thought the grass was greener where He stood;
I thought the sun must make His shadow light,
Like a new Adam whom his God called 'good.'
He smiled till even my cold stone was bright.
'And Mary,' said He, 'why disconsolate
When all the rest the Lord's appearing wait?'

"'Not Mary now,' I said, 'but Magdalen!
The world wags ill, and Christ is far away,
And Heaven's as cruel as yon praying men.
What love or hope have I this Easter day?'
'Wilt have my love,' He said, but I said, 'Nay,
Thou knowest not the cost—the world's they say.

"'This boy unfathered, and his mother lost,
And all their wagging tongues that cut like whips.
Nay, but we two alone will pay the cost!
He draws the pain out with his pretty lips.

The black blood turns to milk at my heart's core,
What shall I do when he shall draw no more?'

"'Mary,' He said, and my heart warmed again,
Like spring-kissed buds that open and are glad;
'I love thee, and in love forget thy stain.
Come, I'll be father to the little lad.
Electing him to heir my fair estate,
And none shall call him illegitimate!'

"Then I fell straightway at His sandalled feet;
'Oh, sweetest lover! most beloved friend!
Go, crown some better woman, I entreat!
I can bear on alone until the end,
For what am I to fill a good man's thought,
Or drag him down to share my shameful lot?'

"Whereat He looked on me; oh, sweetest eyes!
'Mary,' He said, and then I understood,
And as a wounded bird to cover flies
To die within the shadow of the wood,
I crept into the arms He opened wide,
And sobbed for joy, for I was satisfied.

"He held me close—I could not feel the cold,
He smiled, and I forgot the smile of scorn;
My body seemed a garment worn and old,
And all my happy soul was newly born,
And open like a beggar's hand to hold
The King's fair largess—love's uncounted gold."

She looked up meekly, and a golden ray
  Shone on her forehead through the chestnut trees.
"Tell us his name," the awe-struck maidens say,
  Whereat she gazed aloft, like one who sees
The vision of his saint, long time adored;
"I will," she said, "His name is Christ, the Lord!"

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN., 1875.

TO THOSE THAT ARE BEYOND THE RIVER—PEACE.

WHEN Death had closed your eyes, sweet friend,
and neighbors came to borrow
Some argument from speechless clay to prove
Heaven's bright to-morrow,
They scanned awhile your noble face, and marked
each wasted feature,
And then one said, with bated breath: "She's
better off, poor creature.

"She had no gift for common life; she wove her
whims around it,
Nor was content to take the world exactly as she
found it.
On man's depravity she tried to graft the grace of
Heaven,
But all her wit could not avail to make odd num-
bers even.

"She had no call to storm the world with her
ideals of beauty,
Or break her soul upon the wheel to serve her
sense of duty.
She saw too straight for happiness, she told the
truth too plainly,
So here she spilled the lees of life, and loved and
suffered vainly."

"Oh, fools and blind!" of old He said, Oh, fools and blind, to barter
The inner light for policy, and make the truth a martyr!
I count her wasted virtue more than fraud's successful glazing,
And her more honored in your blame than in your meager praising.

She bent no knee to hoary sin of circumstance or fashion,
Her eyes too level with the stars to see the lights of passion;
She dwelt apart from dwarfish souls who called themselves her betters,
To break His bread to fainting hearts, and make the poor her debtors.

She deemed that lust defrauded love; that wedded love was purer
Than even maiden innocence; that judgment waited surer
For him who dared to marriage rite a filthy heart to carry,
Than for the wretch who merely robs a priestly sanctuary.

She walked upright, as if that way her brow to Heaven was nearer;
She lifted honest eyes to God as if to see Him clearer;

So, when our desert manna here no more sufficed
to feed her,
God breathed upon her upturned face, and beck-
oned home the pleader.

He sets His stars above your reach; they will not
quit their shining,
His truth eternally abides, despite your undermin-
ing.
Then leave the shallow plummet here, you brought
to gauge your sister,
Nor breathe reproach upon the brow where late
the angels kissed her!

MY BABY.(4)

My little one, whose being sweet
Makes our two married lives complete,
  And fills me with an awesome fear,
O baby-soul! O baby-heart!
Be still, and tell me what thou art,
  And wherefore thou art coming here.

This world and we are too defiled
For such as thee, thou sinless child,
  So loving and so innocent.
Art thou from some bright isle afar,
Ensphered in a crystal star
  And bounded by a calm content?

Then wherefore art thou seeking so
The burden of our earthly woe,
  The garment of our human pain?
To seek and lose and question why;
To love like gods, like clay to die,
  Sure this for thee were little gain!

My child, will not thy little face
Be earnest of forgiving grace
  To her whose life thy own controls?
No higher gift his love bestows,
And earth no nobler mission knows,
  Than motherhood to deathless souls.

Then come, dear heart! come, little feet!
God make thy pathway very sweet
  With lily, rose and blossom white,
And make the soul He gave thee shine
With glory sacred and divine,
  Like that the Christ-child wears in light.

Come, Baby-hands! Come, Baby-lips,
As in some rapt apocalypse,
  I see my little angel stand,
Like some white dove the Lord has lent,
With oil and balm of Gilead sent,
  To travelers in a weary land!

He views me with his father's eyes,
Full of all loving sympathies;
  He puts me at *my* Father's feet,
With spotless hands so late from heaven;
He prays his mother's sins forgiven,
  And makes us three in God complete.

1866.

WHY?

OH! Violet, in the meadow-grass,
  Why are thy eyes so full of tears?
No clouds in thy blue heaven pass,
  Thou hast no thought of human years,
The sun that warms thee loves thee well,
The blue above thee paints thy bell,
Then wherefore weep and sorrow thus?
Go to! and leave the tears to us.

Oh! Willow! wherefore bend and weep,
  And vaunt thy grief before our face?
Thou hast no woes to sob to sleep,
  Or need to mourn departed grace;
Thy green branch o'er our losses waves,
Thy tassels drop upon our graves,
Then wherefore weep and weary thus?
Go to! and leave the grief to us.

Oh! Brooklet! sing us something gay;
  The sparkles in thy ripples shine;
The small birds sip and trill a lay
  That asks more blithe reply than thine.
Thou art not running to our sea,
The Sea of Life's Eternity,
Then wherefore croon and murmur thus?
Go to! and leave the dirge to us.

Oh! Flower and Tree and bonny Brook!
I trow a deeper need have ye
For tear and plaint and drooping look
Than careless eyes at first may see.
Immortal hopes ye may not know
Who share no human joy or woe,
Then wherefore should I blame you thus
Who leave eternal bliss to us?

1865.

ELFRIDA.

THE rows of corn like plumèd knights
  Stood up to guard the farmer's daughter,
And shook and rustled mockingly
  The while that love and I besought her.

"Ah, love!" I cried, "your heavenly eyes,
  Your golden hair, my sweet Elfrida,
Have set a snare to catch my heart,
  And brought me here a special pleader.

"Now how much love have you to spare?"
  She laughed a laugh like running water;
"Say, how much for the eyes and hair,
  And how much for the farmer's daughter?"

Her voice rang out so eerily,
  She tripped away so feat and airy,
I said: "Now did they name you right,
  And are you half an elf or fairy?"

"In sooth," she laughed, "we're all akin.
  The squirrel is my younger brother;
The bird and bee make love to me
  So well, I laugh at any other.

"Go! take a lesson of the brook
That woos the tree-top to embrace it;
Go! ask the robin on his nest
How he persuades his mate to grace it.

"*They* do not bungle, like a man,
They know a thousand sweet love-phrases:
But *you*, you laud her eyes and hair
And woo a maiden with cheap praises.

"Go! study how to win a soul!
The art will well repay your learning."
She turned and through the corn rows sped,
My longing vision scarce discerning,

Which were her curls of golden floss
And which the corn-stalks yellow tassels;
I only know they held her safe
From touch of mine, like trusty vassals.

BUTTERCUP WOOING.

SHE plucked a flower beside the brook,
A yellow flower among the hay;
She bent above me with a look
Half child, half woman—"Tell me pray
Do you love butter?"

"This buttercup shall be the sign."
She held it just below my chin,
And close she bent her cheek to mine,
The cheek that had the dimple in—
"Do you love butter?"

Nay, love, it is a *human* flower
That casts its glow upon my life.
Others may woo her for an hour
But I, I woo her for a wife,
And I love but her.

Ah! more than yellow buttercup,
Love's crimson roses dyed her cheek,
Sweetheart! your lover says look up
And read the vow he can not speak
To aye love but her!

LOVE'S INVENTORY.

'TWAS when the farmer's hope was young,
And all the fields were rarely green,
And in the grass the violets sprung
With modest innocence between,
When Madge and I
All in the sunny, bright, May weather,
Love and I
Took account of stock together.

But silver threads were in her head,
Dim was her once love-lighted eye,
She seemed beside the girl I wed
An old moon fading in the sky.
Could this be why
All in the sunny, sweet, May weather,
Love and I
Could not walk in peace together?

Of treasure at the rainbow's end
Our silent partner, Love, had told;
So short we made our bow extend
We found full soon the pot of gold,
But all the glow,
Joy and cheer for rainy weather,
No, ah! no,
These were not in stock together.

But if we owned a songless nest,
And if our love we'd sold away,
We only to the birds confessed;
Ah, woe is me! Ah, well a day!
What boots it now,
Lapped in delight, Love's own May weather,
Tell the vow
We took the day we walked together.

AN ENDED QUEST.

SOMETIMES I pause to ponder
The story quaint and old,
How bees for honey eager
Swarmed Pindar's lips of gold;
And then that other legend
By old Anacreon told,
How bees stung wingéd Cupid,
Their rival overbold.

'Twas song and love, my darling,
The sweetest flowers earth-blown;
But Song was aye unguarded
While Cupid watched his own;
If lips like those, my darling,
The jealous bees had known,
And ever found untended
The bards had fared alone.

Fairer is love than learning,
Sweeter its honies be;
With more than wild bees yearning
I sought my fate of thee;
When thou that love returning
Lisped back a vow to me
The world were well forgetting
All meaner melody.

Let art try all her strophes
  Her many bards possess;
Poor bees! earth's sweetest honey
  Distilled in Mary's "yes."
Leave Hybla and Hymettus,
  They know no love like ours;
Their bees were only wild bees,
  And only fed on flowers.

Oh! little woodland brothers,
  Blythe bees that love your store,
If honied sweets ye covet,
  Go roam the earth no more;
Together we'll discover
  The sweetness at its core,
For who has ever uttered
  Such golden words before?

LOVE'S ART.

If lilies told their secrets
  And roses sold their red,
I'd haply know what charmed me so
  The day that we were wed.

If mignonette grew anywhere
  But on its lowly stalk,
I'd think she stole its fragrant soul
  To sweeten all her walk.

But since no roses in the world
  Nor lilies are so sweet,
I know her art's the loving heart
  That makes my life complete

LINES TO E. F. G.

WITH A BALSAM PILLOW.

MOUNTAIN balm beguile her,
By a sweet dream wile her,
The slumber islands—
Fast by fairy highlands,
There, Titania, woo her
Lest care still undo her.
Let the bee, loved hummer,
Sing of endless summer;
While the elves eschewing
All their freakish doing
Slumber draughts are brewing.
Then oh! softly wake her
Lest the wee folk take her,
And our loss discover
How all creatures love her.

1890.

COQUETTISH HELEN.

INVITE the sun to leave the sky
And tarry in our garden-close
That, for our sole behoof, thereby
Fuller may bloom Love's royal rose;
And it were vain!
And Helen, she whose light was born
And died with his in fables past,
Sweet name that signifies the Dawn,
If Love should hold the maiden fast
Could she remain?

She wears her veils like morning mist,
Her cloud-like shawls of rosy hue,
And never lover's lip had kissed
Her cheek, save only sun and dew,
She is so coy.
They call her hoyden and coquette,
Her royal largess is so free;
Poor souls! their pains make them forget
If one could win the rest would be
Bereft of joy.

For thousand hearts their strength renew,
Each in the glory of her smile;
She has her own sweet work to do,
And can not wait for love the while,

How'er we sigh.
The longing sunflower loves the sun
And follows with adoring face,
But if he asked to be the one
Only beloved in every place,
It would deny

Thousands of buttercups the gold
For which they wait with open purse;
And if her love to one she told
Many a heart would ache the worse
For loss and ruth.
So God who made the planets roll
Like golden flowers in steadfast ring,
He made her for a central soul
And us for sunflowers worshiping
Her glorious youth.

CALABRIAN SONGS. (5)

MATIN SONG.

WHAT shall we bring to our Lord's blessèd mother?
What shall we sing to the blessed of the Lord?
Bring her the gift of the heart, and no other,
Sing the wild carols our mountains afford:
Easing her burden,
This be our guerdon,
Songs of Calabria, loved of the Lord!

Sing how the summer her robe puts upon her,
Making the wine in the grape's purple heart;
Tell how the mountaineer drinks in her honor,
Loth from her beauty at vintage to part,
Pressing her sweetness
Into song's meetness,
Song meet as wine is for winter's sad heart!

Bagpipe and tabor are better than sabre,
God send the carol the angels once sang:
Peace on the earth and good will to the neighbor,
Shepherds like us know of old how it rang.
Sound it oh, tabor!
Pipe it oh, neighbor!
Sing, shepherds, sing! as the angels once sang!

EVEN SONG.

Oh, shepherds! leave your flocks awhile
And all their downy folds forget;
The evening star begins to smile,
But Christ's is not arisen yet;
Our Lady longs with empty arms
And Earth her round attentive spins,
For Heaven will sing its sweetest psalms
When His "good will to men" begins.

Sweet mother! fear not, though of old
The earth and sky were not so cold!
And is it true the story told
When Christ was born, our Savior dear,
The silver streamlet ceased to sing,
The bird hung poised upon the wing,
The almond blushed in blossoming
For joy to know their Lord so near
Though it, in sooth, be glad, nor fear
The snow that decks *our* wintry year,
For earth itself has blossomed here
In one fair flower of white to cheer
Thy trial hour;
Better than almonds is the blush
Of budding souls in holy hush
Who own His power
And humbly wait till He appear.

Oh! if there be a pine that stands
  The tallest on our mountain head,
Whereon the moon with priestly hands
  A golden blessing oft has shed,
Deck with its green our Lady's shrine,
  Dusk with its shade our wonted sins;
Then let the star of Christmas shine
  When His "good will to men" begins!

EVEN SONG.

MARY, Mother! now the sun
Dies our watching hills upon.
So may sins departing fire
While we wait our Lord expire.
Lest the angel choir be long
Here we bring our even song
Like a child whose light drawn breath
Yet his mother comforteth;
Sweetest songs thy sorrows move,
Mother of Immortal Love!
Mary, mother! wait serene,
All thy shrines are dressed with green
Mountain pine that touched the sky
Nearest where God's angels fly.
Hither, too, we bring the meed
Of the poor whose bitter need
Spares a cake thy heart to cheer;
Now thy trial hour is near

Fear it not, for mortal pain
Cometh not with Christly gain.

Ave Mary! ever blessed,
Think of that divinest guest!
Soon will come the Christmas morn,
Soon thy little child be born;
Then, for fitly mothering Him,
Thou, amidst the cherubim
Ever more shalt hear us say
Ave Mary! when we pray
Never more may any be
Motherless because of thee.

Mary, mother! fear thou not
Though the stables be thy lot!
When the manger, freshly spread,
Lightens round the Holy Head
And the cattle, dumb no more,
Kneel before Him on the floor,
Praising with the heavenly host,
Oh! remember then the most,
Not the warm, unfriendly inn,
But a cold world dumb with sin.

Rest thee then, and courage take,
Shepherds all around thee wake.
All our flocks are folded near,
Waiting till the star appear;

Then our herds a gift shall hold
When the wise men bring their gold,
Manna, honey, oil and wine,
Mary, shall be His and thine,
All the poor man's hoarded store,
Mother Heart, what would'st thou more?

1885.

A CHRISTMAS GARLAND.

If the lilies purer were,
Each a cool white cloister,
There would I Thy Manger set,
Holy Child, who lov'st us yet;
And with gifts of spice and myrrh,
Bought by King and sorcerer,
I would have Thy star lead down
Little Kings who need no crown,
Richly laden, rank on rank,
To that fragment lily bank.
Most thou lov'st with them to be,
Oh! then, make a child of me.
If the door
In Heaven's floor
Be no higher than innocence,
Since a child Thou camest thence,
Let my Christmas stature take
Thy sweet measure for Love's sake.

Since of old a princely stranger
Made His hostelry a manger,
Pilgrim stranger, oh! let me
Fall in love with poverty.
Poor in spirit,
Oh! inhabit,

Jesu, all my lowly dwelling,
Richly poor beyond the telling
With angelic galaxies,
For its faded tapestries,
And the lilies of Thy grace,
Sweetly scenting all the place.
So did'st Thou Thy stable old
Deck with more than cloth of gold.
Christmas hut, or Christmas hall,
Nothing matters tho' a stall,
If we house the Lord of all.

They asked no more,
Those Kings of yore,
Than just to worship and adore;
  Oh, Child! new born
  Each Christmas morn,
We need Thy grace as ne'er before.

To-day our kings
Are sordid things;
Far gleams the star, the angel wings.
  Our own hands hold
  The bribe of gold
While happy near a siren sings.

Oh, Jesu! take
For Love's sweet sake
Our hearts, and these Thy kingdom make!
  No changing creeds
  Or modern needs
Shall e'er Thy gentle sceptre break.

BROTHER ANGELO.

At Florence, where the faithful love to show
The pictured glories of Angelico,
Dwelt Brother Angelo of holy life:
White was his soul, and blameless, save for strife
Of windy doctrines for the church's weal;
A good Dominican, he could but feel
How passing evil were Franciscan ways;
And every day he plead that for His praise
God would vouchsafe to him some work to do
That should reveal His will to men anew.
One day as on the stone his knees he bent,
Through all the cell a rushing murmur went,
As of a thousand wings of cherubim,
And voices silver-toned said to him:
"Angelo, God would have thee paint anon
A missal, fairest ever looked upon,
And all around the text, below, above,
Would have thee tint the color of His love."
"Well said," thought Angelo, "for sure we know
The circling seraphim that, row on row,
Surround the throne the nearest Him, are red;
It is love's color limners aye have said."
But though he wrought, no sign by day or night
Proclaimed that he had read God's will aright.
As through the meadows forth one day he fared,
He saw a lily lone, which sweetly shared

Its noisome pool with many a noxious weed,
Yet on its head a glory shone, indeed,
And on its leaf a legend seemed to run—
"Hast thou found love, oh! proud Dominican?"
Angelo quaked, but pondered—might it be
That love was white? this flower a mystery
Like that which Gabriel unto Mary brought
When Heaven's love its greatest wonder wrought?
Angelo knelt—"Oh! God! our heart has shown
The angels red and blue about thy throne;
But thou, oh, God! thou art the central light
So clear the seraphs veil them from the sight—
Who paints *thy* Love? I leave my pages white."

Reader, an age that hardly knew to spell,
Of brotherhood, the first few letters well,
Missed the full secret of a ray of light
Which to the common eye appeareth white.
Perchance the painter's early dream was true
That love was red, and contemplation blue,
Passing the prism of God's service through.
But perfect love like perfect light must be,—
All tints of faith and hope and charity,—
Made white in Him who is their unity.
Then let a rainbow arch thy loving breast
O'er one white heart which carries all the rest.

RENUNCIATION.

OLD Canute, whose foot was wet,
("Foolish King" they call him yet),
Challenging the rising sea—
Fool or no
Truth will show
He has goodly company.

For another sea beside
Rolls its moonless mystic tide
Up and down the shores of Fate.
Solemn Sea
Of Destiny,
On whose verge we sit and wait.

And though every sobbing wave
Is of human loss a grave,
We stretch out our sceptered hand
In a great
Royal state,
"Come no farther," we command.

Love goes with us to the brink,
Time and tide will wait we think;
When the marriage myrtle blows
Round his head,
Garlanded,
Who would drown its mate the rose?

"Back!" we cry, "or ever yet
Beauty's sandalled foot be wet!
Yield her from the foamy wave
Venus-like,
Woman-like,
Lest the bath should be her grave."

Ah! wet sandal, wave-washed zone!
Bride of Lethe, or our own?
How it creepeth—how it nears
Beauty's breast,
Love's fond rest,
Till its salt is salt of tears!

Come away as mourners should,
Sorrow's tide is at its flood;
Beauty's dead, and Love is mute,
While the surge
Chants *their* dirge
Who may mock at old Canute?

Once by far Hellenic seas
Neptune's shipwrecked votaries
Hung their garments in his fane;
Trophies torn
By the scorn
Of a God they might not chain.

So to thee, engulfing Fate,
We resign our purple state,
Love and Beauty's royal suits,
Myrtle crown,
Tear washed gown,
Hang them up with old Canute's.

THE POET'S LAW.

"Great care is taken," says Goethe, "that the tall trees do not grow into the sky."

THE scholar laid his book aside,
An apple dropped above his head;
"So is thy doctrine verified,
Oh master of the law!" he said.

"Newton, of all our scholar-guild
Favored the primal law to see,
Thou hast but conquered half the field,
A deeper truth is in the tree.

"What gives the sap its upward flow
That mocked thy law since time began?
What instinct stirs within it so,
Like worship in the heart of man?"

The poet-scholar went his way,
The wind-swept meadow walking down;
A softened glory seemed to play
Around his path to Cambridge town.

For he who lights the page we read
With glimpse of higher laws than sense,
Though science may deny his creed,
He is a priest of Providence.

Earth's mighty forces hold the tree,
The apple drops and tastes of death;
But heaven watches jealously,
Or so the German seer saith,

Lest overmuch the sap may own
The gravitation of the sky;
Or lest the dryad may have known,
Like us, its immortality.

For half immortal, mortal half,
The dryad shared our milk and wine,
Doomed half our bitter cup to quaff
And half of Hebe's cup divine.

Beguiled in earth's compelling lap
When heaven is distant but a span,
It seems half ichor is the sap,
Half godlike is the blood of man.

The poet only knoweth why
The law of gravity was given;
Lest trees too early reach the sky
And men too soon return to heaven.

1885.

FROM MYTH TO MATERIALISM.

I THOUGHT of the lore of sages,
All that their wisdom saith
Of the folly of human endeavor,
And the shortness of human breath,
And of how the long procession
Has gone o'er the hills of death.

Some to the dim Nirvana,
Some to Elysian Fields,
Some to the fierce Valhalla
Borne on their dripping shields,
And some to the Christian's heaven
That the tree of healing yields;

And I said, "Oh! God of our fathers,
What fables Thy children tell
At last, as in ancient Jewry,
The Sadducee befell,
So now, in the name of Science,
We have learned his lesson well.

Out of primeval firemist,
Or the protoplasmic cell,
These creatures of thine have fashioned
Another heaven and hell;
A drearier Nirvana
Than the ancient bards fortell.

For numberless gravitations
  These vanishing earth-worms draw,
Our Living and Dying and Loving,
  All bound by remorseless law,
A great necessity, sterner
  Than the vision Plato saw.

Not truer is the instinct
  Of the needle to the pole,
Than we to our place in nature,
  The dead to their destined goal.
And who may decide if matter
  Have as yet evolved a soul?

The engineer who elected
  To die to save his train,
The priest among his lepers
  Disdainful of death and pain,
Oh! spirit that ever derideth,
  Answer your riddle again. (6)

THE WOOD-THRUSH AT SUNSET.

Lover of solitude,
Poet and priest of nature's mysteries,
If but a step intrude,
Thy oracle is mute, thy music dies.

Oft have I lightly wooed
Sweet Poesy to give me pause of pain,
Oft in her singing mood
Sought to surprise her haunt, and sought in vain.

And thou art shy as she,
But mortal, or I had not found thy shrine
To listen breathlessly
If I may make thy hoarded secret mine.

Thy tender mottled breast,
Dappled the color of our primal sod,
Now quick and song-possessed,
Doth seem to hold the very joy of God.

Joy hid from mortal quest
Of bosky loves on silver-moonéd eves,
And the high-headed hest
That swells thy throat with joy among the leaves.

Like the Muezzin's call
From some high minaret when day is done,
Among the beeches tall
Thy voice proclaims, "There is no God but one."

And but one Beauty, too,
Of whose sweet synthesis we ever fail;
She flies if we pursue,
Like thy swift wing down some dim intervale,

For thou art lightly gone,
Gone is the flute-like note, the yearning strain,
And all the air forlorn
Is breathless till it hear thy voice again,

But thou wilt not return;
Thou hast the secret of thy joy to keep,
And other hearts must learn
Thy tuneful message ere the world may sleep.

Sleep lulled by many a dream
Of sylvan sounds that woo the ear in vain,
While still thy numbers seem
To voice the pain of bliss, the bliss of pain.

TO THE WOOD ANEMONE.

"Her tears to the wind-flower,
His blood to the rose."

BION.

WHEN bereavèd Cytherea
Saw Adonis on his bier,
Where the rose that was his blood
Wasted fast its fragrant flood,
Straight the tears came, dropping slowly
Love's fond tears, celestial, holy;
Woman like, the goddess spouse
Mourned, as in a stricken house
Mourn the mortal for their dead;
While the bitter tears she shed
(So benign the heavenly powers,
So unlike their grief to ours)
Blossomed into vernal flowers.

Thou pale darling, Cypris' tear
Art to every mourner dear.
Thou, the type of life to be,
Heavenly eyed anemone!
Underneath thy snowy whitness
Lingers, like a blush, the brightness
Of that purple wound of death,
Fading in the spring's warm breath—
Fading till thy cup is white
As the saints that walk in light;

Ah! let not a trace remain!
For when thou hast lost thy stain
Love and I may smile again.

Little firstling of the year,
Risen spirit of a tear,
I have found thee where the snow
Scarce made room for thee to grow:
In New England's forest reaches
Where no fabled Love beseeches
With her bleeding foot forlorn
Waiting for thy birthday morn.
Shall I pity thee for this?
Warm thy coldness with a kiss?
Whisper that if far away,
Redder 'neath the Orient day,
Love would claim thee hers for aye?

Nay, thou darling of the soul,
Keep thy western lineage whole!
I will dream this New World soil
Is the heaven for which we toil;
And that in thy tender greeting
I my own lost dead am meeting.
Not a tale the poets tell
Of the Elysian asphodel,
Or the mystic doffodil,
Leaning over Enna's rill,
Brings immortal bliss so near
As thy small, white blossoms here,
Half a hope and half a tear.

WHERE'S HYLAS?

"A god can not be hidden from a god."—GREEK LEGEND.

THIS is the place, a mountain lake,
Whose lights the glimmering shadows break;
'Twas here I lost him quite.
His hair with flowers she braided in,
He touched a tinkling mandolin,
She drew him from my sight—
My hero, lover, knight.
Where's Hylas?

The myrtle on his brow was wet,
He had not time to half forget
The kiss I half forbid.
When lo! I lost him! Is it true
From those who love as high gods do,
A god can not be hid
The meaner mass amid?
Where's Hylas?

He left me 'twixt two silences
Where soul or sense the mightiest is.
Was he the god or I?
He put all heavens between us two—
All hells. The Lamia trail he drew
Across my soul's pure eye;
I saw my fair god die.
Where's Hylas?

"Oh, Echo! magnify my loss,"
I cried, and sent my wail across
That bitter summer sea.
My loss? The whole world knew the pain,
Myriad voices back again
My selfish question gave
From many an idol's grave.
Where's Hylas!

1892.

FOUR TYPES OF WOMANHOOD.

"And I cried!
Oh! Paris, give it to Pallas."
TENNYSON'S ÆNONE.

ATHENÈ.

How shall we choose thee, goddess chaste and calm?
It is not Paris but the woman race
Will ask thy worth and judge thee face to face.
Above the city, violet-crowned, thy arm
Sheltered the Greek, and dropped ambrosial balm
On sage and poet, but thou had'st no grace
For wife or daughter in the enchanted place:
The gynecæum sealed with Learning's charm,
Only the courtezan might dare and know.
But womanhood and these were not akin;
When mad Orestes sought thee in his woe
Thou did'st deny thy mother, and his sin.
Change thou! or ere we change the old decree
Oh! come again and bring a heart with thee. (7)
1888.

PHRYNÈ.

SHE stood before her judges, rosy, fair,
Like Aphrodite, sure of Paris's eye.
No girdle bound her waist, just symmetry;
Her sunny tresses on her shoulders bare

She laughing shook (the fragrant rippling hair
Crowned with the golden grasshopper), for why
Should "earth-born" men such beauteous grace
deny
Or measure justice when she choose to snare?
Ah! beauty-loving Greek, to whom the curve
Of rosy flesh itself was all divine!
The impious one thy justice may not swerve
For Zeus shall punish and the doom assign.
She saw—her bosom's veil aside she swept,
Showed the white breast, and outraged justice slept.
1888.

MAGDALENE.

SAD-BROWED! thou art the old world's exponent,
For thou wast Pallas in her high estate,
And thou art Phryne! Lo! the night is late
And a new sun flushes the firmament.
Say, did'st thou hear what time thy brows were bent
Prone to His cross, that awful cry elate
Sound o'er Hellenic seas the doom of Fate
"Great Pan is dead," and how the echo sent
A thunder through Olympus? 'Twas the hour
When "Elovi," he cried, and hung between
Two shuddering worlds, wrapped in the mystic power
That waits between the unseen and the seen.
He plucked a flower of hope in that far place
And dropped it on thy head for healing grace.
1888.

THE NEW ATHENÈ.

THE world is old, and all the gods are old,
And all their myth and oracle are sought
Only to trace the genesis of thought.
And thou thyself art as a tale that's told,
Peerless Athenè! Yet thine ideal holds
The fruitful seed of all the ages taught.
Knowledge aud power and purity are bought
Not when the human mind is basely sold.
Yet, yet shall man and woman be redeemed,
And thy chaste bridals heaven and earth shall hold
When the old dreaming world at last has dreamed,
Its ideals level with Time's age of gold.
Love shall attend thee then, Love unenslaved,
And the fair city of the soul be saved.
1888.

HAPPINESS.

TO E. F. P. ON HER MARRIAGE.

If Happiness would sit at Love's dear feet,
A steady guest, nor ever change her sky,
Then I would wish that Happiness for aye
Might stay with thee, nor ever leave her seat.
But they who count the most her presence sweet,
They lose her most,—the plea she passes by
To join her sister Blessedness, whose eye
Watches the souls beset who hard entreat.
Work then, nor ask if happiness be thine;
Endure as strong men in a race endure.
Drink any cup that comes of Life's red wine
So only that thy heart and lips be pure.
Then call on Blessedness with one full cry,
And Happiness shall answer: "here am I."
1888.

EDELWEISS.

TO C. I. P. AND M. F. ON THEIR MARRIAGE.

I LEAVE, dear wife, a flower upon thy breast
When, warderless, I lay me down to sleep;
My soul in thee safe sanctuary keeps,
Nor fears a foe hard by a shrine so blest.
Daily I climb Life's rugged Alpine crest
Amid a thousand snares and pitfalls deep;
I only pluck one flower along the steep,
The little sky-kissed flower thou lovest best.
As fares the laborer home to sleep's embrace,
Yet halts to lay an offering shyly down
Before some wayside Virgin's hallowed face,
With this white flower thy equal shrine I crown
To tell thee, sweet, how high his path must be,
How white his life, who is beloved by thee.

1884.

EUTHANASY.

If sleep held half the blessedness of Death,
We would not wake when bleak to-morrow morns
Hang haggard on the skirts of yesterdays,
But keep the even pulse, the measured breath;
For so do they whom Death hath coaxed to sleep
(A stern-faced nurse, with fingers strangely soft)
The secret of their bliss in silence keep,
Nor wake to tell it, though we urge them oft.
Spellbound before Eternity's surprise,
Their bodies like enchanted princes lie,
What time their souls renew the Eden quest,
To know like gods, nor fear to be too wise.
The penalty of speech we can not tell,
Who'd bar their pathway to eternal day?
One word—a look perchance might break the spell,
The freed soul loves its wings, and dare not stay.

MILKWEED.

ALONG New England hedges, when at first
The redding sumach signals coming snow,
Half broken-hearted, with a breezy woe,
A milkweed army from their tents have burst.
Thro' miles of browning lanes they fly dispersed
In silvery legions scouting to and fro.
The children take them captive as they go
Like eerie soldiers, fairy born and nursed.
Even so, when frosty winter nears their heart,
Released from camps of care, a white-haired band
Plant in our homes the winged seeds that start
To childish love, and reverence on each hand.
Half of the earth they seem, yet half apart,
Keep, kindly God, the grandmas of our land!

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

981946A

A CROCUS.

In gray heroic days, in ages olden,
E'er iron Progress blew her note of steam,
Man used to see in flowers blue and golden
Some bright ideal or some fairy dream.

Those were the olden days, the blissful season
When Faith was bright and Hope was always young,
And men forgot sometimes the rule of reason
To hear the song that Love or Fancy sung.

That day's last flush has left the Grecian mountains,
No muse or goddess haunts the fabled hill;
But still around us flow Castalian fountains,
The *soul* of Poetry breathes round us still.

A nobler song than lives in Homer's pages,
Springs from a crocus if we will but hear;
'Tis God's handwriting, thus through all the ages
His hand has scattered poems far and near.

But when with old time superstition sated
We still may seek the flowers, and think how long
Our God has sent them to us fresh created
Preachers of light, and liberty, and song.

MIRAGE.

A FOUNTAIN in the desert burst,
And weary travelers stopped to drink.
Though all the ground about was cursed,
Yet flowers grew upon its brink.
Faint heart and weary feet it blest
With promptings of the coming goal;
And travelers called it "Pilgrim's Rest,"
A refuge for a weary soul.

I was in desert worse than this,
I was a traveler, pilgrim shod,
Life's bright mirage, its faded bliss
Had left me but the waste and God.
When lo! a fountain sprang from Christ,
A blessing for my weary days.
I named the spot the "Pilgrim's Rest,"
And marked the place with prayer and praise.

———)(———

SELFISH rogue, did Psyche dream
When her lamp she held above him,
How the oil would downward stream,
Wake the rogue and make her love him?

THE DREAMER.

In my youth's gay, sunny morning,
  Ere my dreamland passed away,
Or the rose-flush of the dawning
  Melted in the riper day,
Built I many an airy castle
  Where my soul should dwell for aye.

Towers of stone and doors of iron
  Wrought I for its strong defense.
"I am mightier than Time is;
  These shall flourish ages hence."
Thus I boasted in my weakness
  With no thoughts of Providence.

I had vassals, I had banners
  'Broidered with a mystic sign,
Cattle browsing on the hillsides
  In the sunlight, all were mine;
And my barns were overflowing
  With their stores of corn and wine.

"Drink," I said, "O soul, be merry!
  Eat, to-day may be thy last;
Seize the present time and pleasure
  This is all the life thou hast.

"Not for thankless Duty's mission,
Shall my soul her *ease* resign;
And the rugged path of duty,
Is for stouter feet than mine."

So I turned me to my revel,
Bade the harpers sing once more,
And the light feet of the dancer
Trip upon the oaken floor,
But my soul was heavy, Conscience
Stood and pleaded at my door.

Slowly crumbled the foundations
I had built so strong of late,
Round me an o'ermastering presence
Brooded like the wing of Fate,
For I heard the voice of Wisdom
Thundering at my Castle gate.

Wisdom calls. My fabrics vanish.
"Turn ye—turn at my reproof—
Lo! my spirit shall be with you;
Leave thy follies with thy youth.
Be no more the idle dreamer
But a Champion of Truth."

Now the wassail bowl is broken,
And the harpers harp no more;
Rusty hangs the ancient armor,
Mould defiles the oaken floor,
And my soul wears better armor
Than the Knightly steel of yore.

1858.

AMPHION.

ONCE, 'tis said, the poet Amphion,
Filled with high poetic fire,
Raised the walls of Thebes fair city
By the music of his lyre.

So our lives should flow harmonious
Like some songster's pleasing rhyme,
Should be grand and solemn poems
Chanted by the minstrel Time.

So should *we* a power inherit
Which should raise and make us strong,
And build up within the spirit
Bulwarks aganist sin and wrong.

Labor is this mighty lever
Which should raise and make us free;
Earnest, noble, strong endevor
Links us with the Deity.

Are your hands too white for soiling,
Of the "Common herd" afraid?
God's right hand is with the toiling,
All an equal He hath made.

Human pride, it leaves its traces
Wherso'er its shade is thrown;
Like the fabled Gorgon's; faces
Turning human hearts to stone.

But for *me*, let not the dollar
And the stamp of noble birth
Be the standard that I follow,
And my highest test of worth.

He whose hands embrowned by labor,
Worketh well, and worketh sure,
He who scorneth not his neighbor,
He whose heart and life are pure,

Rise and work! Will idle dreaming
Win the shore by angel's trod?
Earthly things are only seeming,
There is nothing true but God.

Onward press! the weeds of pleasure
Flourish not in heavenly soil.
Oh! compute by higher measure,
Learn to win a heaven by toil.

Courage! in the weak beginning
Turn thy face toward the light,
And thou shalt not fail of winning,
God is ever with the right.

1858

THE TRUE CREED.

PILGRIMS at the well of life,
  Lo! we come by doubt opprest;
On our brows the fever strife,
  In our hearts a vague unrest.

Let the waters overflow
  Weary heart and aching sense,
So perchance our souls may know
  More of christian confidence.

Oh! for light and Oh! for grace,
  Like the living light which broke
From the mountain's sacret place
  When the Lord with Moses spoke.

Now the Church's iron hand
  Shapes the substance of our hope,
And we view the Promised land
  Through a creed's kaleidoscope.

Lord! how long for empty pride
  Shall thy truth be sacrificed?
And a doctrines' shadow hide
  All the loving face of Christ?

Vivat Deus! through the strife
  Of the old creeds and the new,
Glimpses of a higher life
  And a deeper faith shines through.

Sometimes on our darkness falls
  Glimses of that central thought
That the earnest-hearted Paul
  Or the mystic Plato taught,

How in spite of sect or creed
  God's sweet mercy reigns above,
And the only creed we need
  Is the doctrine "God is Love."

So along life's dreary road
  Through our shadowland we creep
Till to His divine abode
  God recalls His wandering sheep.

Then the shadow backward cast
  Shall reveal the perfect good,
And the soul may grasp at last
  All it blindly understood.

As the great earth eastward heaves
  On its axis daily spun,
Yet approaches by degrees
  Nearer to the crentral sun—

So through rounds of weary years
  Must *our* upward progress be,
Till our doubtings and our fears
  Blend in Love's Infinity.

1859

L'ENVOI.

THE burden of another day,
The record of its sins and prayers,
Lord Jesus, at Thy feet I lay
A mingled sheaf of wheat and tares.

I mowed them thus with feeble hand,
Regard them, Lord, with pitying look
And let the good fruit waiting stand
But blot the evil from Thy book.

Oh! in Thy vineyard let me be
A laborer worthy of his hire,
Remembering that 'tis love of Thee,
And not the penny I desire.

1860.

"—— AND IN PRISON."

BOUND by sin, a heavy fetter,
Lord, I lie Thy endless debtor;
Lo! look down with eyes of pity
From Thy golden gated city,
Sick and weary and in prison
Let me hear Thee say—forgiven.

Like all other yokes the lightest,
Hope all other hopes the brightest,
Let me bow my head and bear them,
Thou, my Lord, hast deigned to share them.
What can hide the sin of years?
Let me pay my debt with tears.

Oh! that I might once like Mary
Bathe those feet for me, so weary;
Or, like John, might know the blessing
Of the Saviour's near caressing;
Lord, may I then love, inherit,
Gift me with the self-same spirit.

By the all-forgiving power,
By that last and bitter hour,
By that love so mild and tender,
Lord! Thy longing child remember;
Take me from my gloomy prison,
Let me rise as Thou hast risen.

For Thy loving-kindness yearning,
Like a prodigal returning,
Father, let Thine arms enfold me,
In Thy safe, sure mercy hold me;
So from out my gloomy prison
I *shall* rise as He has risen.

1861.

———)(———

SWEETHEART, if Fortune (balky jade)
Refuse your gold to carry
She can not throw you for you know
'Tis not for gold you marry.
There's an old fashioned dowry dear,
A heart, they used to call it,
Let fools go by who fain would try
To match it with a wallet.

"I could not love thee, dear, so much
Loved I not honor dearer,"
So early thought the Huguenot,
I bring the lesson nearer,
Be truth to self and truth to God
The wealth you bring your lover,
And every year Love gives you here
Shall heavenly love discover.

BENEDICITE.

WRITTEN FOR G. E. R. ON HIS DEPARTURE FOR WASHINGTON, D. C., JUNE, 1861.

GOD bless thee, Brother! I were weak indeed
To weigh the Right with my own puny loss:
God strengthen every hand, and make our flag
A fitting back-ground for our holy cross.

God bless thee, Brother! Make that sacred cross
Light, Law, King, Leader in the coming strife.
Christ's benediction falls with healing breath,
"Who loses for my sake shall find his life."

God bless thee, Brother! Oh! Thou dear, dear Christ,
We fight Thy battles, bless and save Thine Own.
Flame Thou before us! Light the whole world up
Until world-wide Thy cross-flag waves alone.

BRIGHT STARS.

WHEN sunlight paints the glowing west
With tints of crimson and of gold,
Night hides the jewels in her breast
And leaves the twilight gray and cold,
And when we mourn the daring theft,
We see the bright stars shine above
With eyes of every look bereft
Except their one expression — Love.

So when the morning hues of life
Fade early in a western sky,
Through all the gloom and fever strife
We see the stars of peace on high.
Mild harbingers of God's repose
Instruct us in your quiet ways;
Like yours, be ours the heavenly race,
Like yours, be ours the song of praise.
1862.

THE DAISY.

GOD'S smile had called the angels home
From realms of earthly shade,
When with his brothers around the throne
Love bowed his head and prayed,

"Father in heaven, I pray that sin
May leave these earthly bowers,
For evil spirits walk within
The paths that once were ours.

"Evil and crime and woe long years
Earth's sunny groves have trod,
And angel eyes grow dim with tears
For man forgets his God.

"Send down I pray Thee from on high
Some flower fair to see,
Which pointing ever to the sky
Shall teach him faith in thee."

And so the Father sent to earth
The little daisy fair.
Behold! a plant of heavenly birth,
It springs up everywhere.

An emblem of God's holy truth,
The Daisy points above,
And in the ear of careless youth
Still whispers faith and love.

1863.

CHRISTMAS POEMS.

THE CHRISTMAS STAR.

THERE is a story told that once a year,
At Christmas, when the star shines bright and clear,
Its gates are opened and with song and strain
The holy Christ-child comes to earth again.
And some have said that those whose hearts are right
Can see the angels standing in the light.
And if their eyes are pure enough can see
Within the star a happy company.
With harps of gold and knots of rosy flowers
And lilies whiter than the best of ours,
Those are the children that the Savior's love
Has won from earth to brighten homes above.
His little lambs safe folded in His breast
No harm can reach them in that holy rest.
And here they wait for us, and ev'ry year
They send their pleasant gifts to children here,
White lily-buds for children undefiled.
And healing leaves on which our Lord has smiled,
These are the holy gifts, sweet flowers that grew
In Heaven's garden sent by Christ to you.

So, children, when the Christmas time is come
And all the stars come twinkling one by one
Perhaps, if all your hearts are kind and true,
You'll see a garland in the star for you,
And Christ may lead you by His own soft hand
Into His star, His blesséd morning land.

Christmas, 1861.

CHRISTMAS—1863.

'TWAS down in the vales of Judea, and there
The hill-tops lay fair
Embosomed in mist in the hush of the air.
At dawning of day,
The labor-worn shepherds in weariness lay
Asleep on the plain,
While angels sang loudly the first Christmas lay
In choral acclaim.

God's glory they sang in the clear breaking morn,
That heavenly dawn.
To you, oh! ye peoples, a Savior is born,
A Prince and a King.
Glad tidings of wonderful goodness we bring,
Peace, Mercy and Love;
The merits of Christ our Redeemer we sing,
The Lamb and the Dove.

No shepherds with flocks, and no angels with palms
Or heavenly psalms;
But the red eye of Battle and soldiers in arms
Are watching to-night
To see the star rise with its halo of light,
The Christ star of old.
The camp fires burn dimly, the tents glisten white
As the story is told.

Jehovah, our God, is the strength of His flock
Their help and their Rock.
He shall save them from fear in the battle's rude shock.
The might of His arm
Shall guard them and shield them and keep them from harm
When danger impends
No foe shall pursue and no fear shall alarm
When Jesus defends.

Ho! soldiers of Jesus! be strong in the fight
For God and the Right.
There's a city whose gates are not shut in the night,
That city is yours.
There's a Star and a Christmas on whose happy shore
Shall never more cease
Where the Shepherd shall gather His people once more
In pastures of peace.

CHRISTMAS AT EISENACH.

1489–93.

"Despise me not the fellows who say 'panem propter Deum' before the doors, and sing the bread-song.(8) I too, have been one of these fellows, and have received bread at the houses especially at Eisenach. . . . I have been a beggar at the doors of the rich."—MARTIN LUTHER.

ABOVE the Wartburg's gloomy tower
The morning star just pricks the dark
And children carol in the hour
When Christmas comes to Eisenach.
Oh! little town! the scholar's gown
Hung loose on childhood long ago
When hunger toned the bread-song down
And Luther sang amid the snow!

It is a childish voice that sings,
A mighty child that sings of Heaven!
Thy chorister, Oh! King of kings,
That lisps the note of sin forgiven.
Oh! burghers! all your coins pour
For largess, ere the children go.
The Future begs before your door
For Luther sings amid the snow.

They carol on the snowy sod
"To us this day a child is born,"
"A mighty fortress is our God,"
Rings out his voice a later morn.
Oh land so proud—so song-endowed!
The sweetest song of thine to know,
Thy childish scholars caroled loud
With Luther in the Christmas snow.

1868.

CHRISTMAS IN MERRY ENGLAND.

1388—1888.

CHRISTEMASSE, 1388.

WHEN Bethlehem shepe were fast aslepe
And yeomen slept withouten care,
In oxen stall the Lord of alle
Yborne was of virgin faire.
Oure Christes herte hadde mickle room
For cattle foddered in the broom,
For bestes gret, and fowles smale,
And godly folk:—He mad us alle,
Ne from His mercie may we falle.

For gentilesse,—may God us blesse—
No other scheweth such renown;
The richest kings their precious things
Must come and lay them all adown,
He of oure sinnes has maked an ende
Unto His service we woll wende.
He daigneth low to our degre
Swete Mary's Son, oure Saviour He,
Ne may we fall from His mercie.

CHRISTMAS, 1588.

Our Good Queen Bess is none the less
  A maiden huswife jolly!
She gives each wight, for Christmas night,
  Good beef decked out with holly,
Of cakes and ale there shall not fail
  Good store for every creature.
While this is soe, who cares to know
  If preist bless all or preacher?

The waifs they bring their caroling,
  The murmers dance the lighter;
Lord of Misrule,—we play the foole
  With Kingly crowne and mitre!
While this is soe dull care may goe
  Though clerkes may clack the harder,
While Yule-tide meanes old games and greens
  And plenty in the larder.

CHRISTMAS, 1688.

The Lord our God is God indeed,
  He makes His face to shine,
In Zion here He plants a seed—
  A new and goodly vine.
The man of sin has fled,
His idols all are dead,
  Give God the praise and glory.

For Yule and Pasch we deck our hearts
  Instead of hearth and hall,
No mummeries nor wanton arts
  Shall cause our faith to fall,
Go! feast with Christ within!
Nor heap too high thy bin!
  And keep thy Yule-tide holy.

CHRISTMAS, 1888.

Christmas wreaths our door with holly,
Laughs the old world into folly.
  Christmas comes but once a year.
Oh! spin lighter, earth, to meet it!
Oh! beat truer, heart, to greet it!
  Tarry, Time, for Love's good cheer!

Brother Christ, of sin the Saviour,
Grant to us Love's good behaviour,
  Light Thy Yule-fire in the heart!
May Thy mass be said forever
In our hearts sincere endeavor
  Till we see Thee where Thou art.

TO MY MOTHER.

MOTHER: to all who know the mother's pain
The Christmas season is not wholly vain.
Not vainly did the ancient nations guess
The mighty human cost of rigteousness.
Out of the womb of evil and of pain
Cometh forever man's eternal gain.
The *Son of Man* they called Him when He came,
Mother of Sorrow so they called *her* name
Who in the stress of poverty and woe
Gave to the dying world a Saviour so.
Oh! mighty symbol of the mother's heart
Of every child of her's a living part!
Hope of the race, and comforter of men,
No wonder they adored the Virgin then!
Oh! Mother, when the Christmas season brings
Its heavenly hopes, its earthly offerings;
Down at thy feet, whose face is next to His,
I lay my heart, its joys and miseries.
The mother only knows the cost of life,
And when love seems a loser in the strife,
Back to us all the primal instinct comes—
We take our hope, our heart and bring it home
To her dear bosom, sure to find in her
Of God's dear love the best interpreter.

Nor yet to-day
With all our art, can we do more than stay

By all the old ideals of the past;
Our blood, our myths all other things outlast.
Our Christmas still is Pagan at the core,
"A living *Sacrifice*," and nothing more!
But through it all the mighty meaning runs
Through Pagan years or rounds of Christians suns—
Eternal Beauty, Joy and Peace is lent
To those who strive for human betterment,
And His transcendent life, which shone so wide
(His own disciples deemed Him deified),
Because for us, the symbol of our hope,
God and the angels cast His horoscope.
His star is not the one of Bethlehem,—
His star is in the inmost souls of men,
Rising upon a night no eye can see—
The murky night of state satiety.
So, when the Roman loathed his bed of flowers,
The love of Christ became his hope and ours.
"Great Pan is dead," a voice came o'er the sea
They said when Christ expired on Calvary.
The Roman and the Greek the voice confest,
The temple owned the Christians new found Guest.
So when the ancient fire was waxing pale,
The Christian knights pursued the Holy Grail
Sure, if the sacred cup He drank of last
Could but be found, the world's dark days were past.

We keep His day—
His Christmas birth so many years away,
Because the world has never found it yet,
That Holy Cup, on which their hearts were set.

Ever the great Ideal flies on before,
The perfect Righteousness they sought of yore!
Never till every soul that drinks the cup
Of common life, drinks consecration up,
Will that pure cup, or gold or common earth
Be found, and common men know holy worth.
The cup, it lies forever at our door!
We use it every time we try to pour
Some Eucharistic draft for others ills,
The light of it our common dwelling fills.
We keep His Christmas till He come again
In brotherhood in all the hearts of men.
Oh! mother, when the Christmas season brings
Its heavenly hopes, its earthly offerings,
Silver and gold I will not offer thee
Who like the Virgin suffered much for me,
But like the penitent before her shrine
Oh! take my heart and all I have for thine.
Like Him I put the mother just between
The Ideal Christ and God, unknown, unseen.
I know His love by what thine is to me,
Assured what e'er His love is or can be
I know it best by what thou art to me.

DECEMBER 25TH, 1890.

CHILDREN'S POEMS.

POPPED CORN.

ONE Christmas Eve the fire was red
And all the young folks snug in bed,
Except the cat and little Fred.

He sat with blue eyes open wide
Watching the embers as they died,
And Kitty gravely watched beside.

"Now Kitty," little Fred began,
"You're but a cat, do all you can,
While I shall one day be a man.

"But still I think you'll like to know
Kriss Kringle's coming o'er the snow,
With sleigh-bells ringing soft and low.

"And when the chimneys smoke at dawn
He'll be here with his wonder horn
Filled up with candy, nuts and corn."

Miss Kitty never winked nor stirred
But gravely pondered all she heard
And answered not a single word.

But bye and bye Miss Kitty spied
An ear of pop-corn winter dried
And rolled it to her masters' side.

Soon Freddy's nimble fingers drop
The golden kernels in to pop
And then they watch to see them hop.

One touched the ceiling as it rose
And one came pat on Freddy's toes
And one hit Kitty on the nose.

"Look Kitty," little Freddy said,
You see those kernels, white and red,
These are the men my father led—

"With soft plumes glancing in the light
And banners waving red and white
Over the soldiers in the fight.

"And that large white one over there
Looks like the plume he used to wear,
Of long white fathers soft and fair."

The fire still burned, the hearth was red,
But Kitty hung her sleepy head,
And Freddy dosed away to bed.

A soldier sat that Christmas night
Beside the camp-fire's dying light
Thinking of home-hearth warm and bright.

Some grains of corn dropped carelessly
Lay in the ashes silently
Then snapped and burst right merrily.

"Those pearly grains," the soldier said,
"Look like my darling little Fred
When he's undressed to go to bed.

"I well remember him to-night,
How fresh he looks, how purely bright
In his long night-gown clean and white.

"Ah! well, 'tis many a weary day
Since I have heard my darling say
'Papa, I have been good to-day.'

"God bless them all with Christmas cheer
And grant me faith and patience here,
Until we meet another year."

The camp fire still was gleaming red,
But the old soldier bowed his head
And breathed a prayer for little Fred.

1864

BUNNY.

I KNEW a merry little elf
That lives among the walnut tops,
And all day long he rocks himself
And listens as the brown nut drops.

He wears a seamless coat of gray
Withont a button or a stitch;
And earns his living every day,
And yet a king is not so rich.

By trade he is a husbandman;
He finds the stoutest nuts that grow
And slyly drops them one by one
Down in his little barn below.

Yet, tho' so plentiful his fare,
He is a selfish little elf—
He will not let the children share,
But wants to keep the whole himself.

He scolds them if they come for nuts,
And chatters if they shake the tree,
And his barn door he safely shuts
And hides the key where they cant see.

"Fie! Bunny fie! come down and dine
  Under the golden walnut trees!
And here's a sip of Adam's wine,
  And there's a bit of bread and cheese.

"We'll welcome you with right good cheer,
  From toad-stool plate and acorn cup,
And you shall sit beside us here
  And help us eat our dinner up."

Wise Bunny softly gnawed his nut,
  Whisk went his tail of dapple gray,
He's safely in! The door is shut!
  Did anybody see the way?

THE CRICKET'S COURT.

TRUANT Eddie on the grass
Watched to see the shadows pass,

And the little folks at play
In the fields the livelong day:

Grasshopper, that sits and sings,
Honey-bee, with dusty wings,

Cricket too, who makes the leaves
Serve him for his cottage eaves.

So upon the meadow hay
Stretched in drowsy ease he lay,

Till upon the fragrant heap
Cricket found him fast asleep.

"Ho!" quoth Cricket, looking black,
"Here's a thief upon his back:

"At my court he shall apper,
I am Lord, High-sheriff here!"

First, at Cricket's chirping call,
Came a toad beside the wall;

Then, a frog, in robe of green,
With a water-rat between,

And, like jurors grave and slow,
Twelve black ants came in a row;

All the wee folks trooping by,
Took their places silently

Round the idler they had found
Sleeping on forbidden ground.

"This young rascal," Cricket said,
"Goes to sleep in *our* bed.

"And just now I heard him say,
'Life is only fit for play';

"'I'll not work while birds and bees
Only play and take their ease.'"

"Well-a-day," says Mistress Wren,
"Birds must work as well as men!

"If I did not dig for food,
Who would feed my little brood?"

"Who'd make honey," said the bee
"If I failed in industry?"

"None can harder work than I,"
Said the Ant to neighbor Fly.

So judge Cricket tried the case,
And, at last, with solemn face,

Found him guilty more or less
Of the crime of idleness;

"And I sentence him," said he,
"To a sharp bite from the Bee;

"And lest that should not suffice,
We'll all bite him in a trice,

"Till he learns to pass the day
Better than in idle play."

Little Eddie cried in pain,
But he sought his foes in vain,

For, beneath the heap of hay,
They had safely hid away.

MABEL.

"HUSH! Mabel!" the lady answered,
"I'm busy just now, you see,
Yes, fifteen dollars from Patrick Dunn
And eight are twenty-three.

"And there's Sam Nevins the baker,
He owes me ninety-two,
I mean to see, this year at least,
I'm paid when the bills are due."

"But grandmother, couldn't he do it?"
"Yes, yes," she at last replies,
While the hungry wolf of avarice
Looked out of her faded eyes.

"Yes, yes, she has three months warning,
She must stiver sick or not!"
"Oh! grandmother, grandmother," quoth the child,
"What great big eyes you've got!"

"Grandmother," the child nestled closer
"Are you certain—certain sure
That wolves don't come to rich folks' doors
As well as those of the poor?

"There's no wood latch on the hall-door
That lifts with a hempen string
But couldn't he take the bell in his mouth
And pull till he made it ring?"

And she shrank from the stately lady
With a nameless cry of fear,
As if the spell would work betimes
And the dreaded wolf appear.

Like the soul of a snow-flake the maiden
Crept out of the dusky room
Where a lady reckoned her bank account,
And her rents in the growing gloom.

Oh! ye women of princely fortune,
Frail owners of God's good ground,
Take care that under your velvet capes
No wolfish heart be found.

For they pay no rent in Heaven,
And the land's not bought nor sold,
And the trusting love of a little child
Is worth a ton of gold.

THE SANDPIPER. (9)

'Tis true that those who care to look
Find Nature like an open book
  With lessons writ for all,
And wisdom sows her choicest seeds
Just on the border of our needs,
  In common things and small.

A rotten stump now fruitful grown,
A colony beneath a stone,
  The spider's magic art,
Teach us with skill that can not err,
And even a little sandpiper
  May shame a faithless heart.

'Twas in that fair and sunny land
Where ocean laves a golden sand
  And skies are always blue,
I walked beside the sea one day
And saw the sandpipers at play
  Where reed and seamoss grew.

The sandy beach was like a floor
And when the waves had swept the shore
  Far down the beach they sped,
Intent like those of human kind,
Their daily bread to seek and find
  From ocean's stormy bed.

Then when the waves came rolling back,
They nimbly hopped before its track,
  Just on the billow's verge,
Or, if it caught some luckless wight
He spread his brownish wings for flight
  And soared above the surge.

So, Lord, thy little servants teach
The crumbs of heavenly grace to reach
  Unmocked by error's sea,
Unvexed by all the storm and loss,
While the rude billows strive and toss
  They shall be kept by Thee.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE POEMS.

THE SHIP OF STATE.

In ages gone by after Constantine great
Joined hands with the church for the good of the state,
They painted a picture, a ship out at sea,
The first ship of state ever painted may be,
The deck with grave prelates was filled to a cram,
While all round the vessel the Commoners swam
And not even kings had a ghost of a hope
Unless some good churchman would throw him a rope.

At last a few nobles by tumult and din
Obliged a cross monarch to pull them all in
With famed Magna Charta, a rope strong and true,
And they let it hang over to tow a choice few.
The water was swarming with women and men
But they talked about freedom and rights even then,
Though never a soul had a ghost of a hope
Unless aristocracy threw him a rope.

The poets swam here and the poets swam there
And gave these fine sailors full many a scare,
Bold Reynard the Fox sang songs to them well
And Dante put popes with their heels up in hell.

But neighbors, you know how it all came about
That the men all got in while the women stayed
out,
'Twas because when Democracy cherished a hope,
The poets forgot us and hauled in the rope.

Now Longfellow sings of a good Ship of State
That breathless humanity hangs on its fate,
And this is quite certain for after the strife,
'Tis only the women are swimming for life.
Oh! men of Rhode Island who long with the rest
Have sought a near route to the rule of the best
As we round our political Cape of Good Hope,
Remember us, brothers, and throw us a rope.

FELICIA.

A MEDIÆVAL LEGEND.

THE Baron's lands were broad and fair,
And long forgot the Saxon's pain;
He had a child, though not an heir,
So all the castle rang amain
With clanging bells, whose happy jar
Said o'er and o'er—"Felicia!"

The wrinkled midwife crossed her brow,
The cowled monk an "ave" said,
"Is there not grief and care enow
And want of hope and want of bread?
Why tempt the blessèd saints too far?
Why name the child, Felicia?"

That night, ah! cold, ah! wintry chill,
A frost destroyed the yeoman's hope;
The little wind-flower on the hill
Hung nipped adown the grassy slope;
And shepherds heard a voice afar
Fall mocking like a falling star
"Felicia! Felicia!"

A spell was in the name I wis,
It bound her by its cruel stress
Ever to seek for human bliss,
And aye to long for happiness,

The little maiden hardly spoke
Before the hidden thirst awoke.

They taught her from a Latin book,
(For many a dame was learnèd then)
And all her soul was in her look
As meek she said, "I fain would ken
More of the world, of Latin less,
I want to learn of happiness."

The goodly chaplain shook his head
And felt his trusty amulet,
"St. Anthony defend!" he said
"For pleasure is the devil's net,
And happiness can never be
Since Eve hath done so wickedly."

But whiles a minstrel played a tune
Of Chivalrie and gentilesse;
His heart was like a rose in June
So warm it glowed for tenderness;
And loud he laughed, the while they read,
To hear the monkish lesson said.

He laughed and touched his lute the while
With many an air of gay Provence;
The little maiden gan to smile
In such a blessedness of sense,
As if her soul had newly woke,
Or as a tender flower had spoke.

But as he sang of knight and dame,
  And many a deed of high emprise,
A little cloud of trouble came
  Into the maiden's wistful eyes;
"I pray thee then, in soothfastness
If *this* indeed, be happiness?"

"My lady dear, and who may wis?
  The minstrel is the church's ban,
But still I count it happiness
  To own one's self, and succor man:
And this I sing, though I may take
No bread or wine for Jesu's sake. (10)

The little maid she grew apace,
  She sought her birthright as she grew;
The child's became the woman's face,
  Her secret bird and flower knew.
The birds laughed out upon the tree
"Ah! happy, happy, happy she
Who dreams of love and liberty!"

She studied Froissart's pictured page
  Petrarch and gay Boccaccio;
She sat an umpire mid the rage
  Of learnèd doctors long ago, (11)
But all their lore she counted less
Than happiness, sweet happiness!

She heard of Magna Charta great
  Where womanhood might not appeal, (12)
She marked her sister's low estate
  Beneath the churchman's iron heel,

And still through all the legend ran
"To own one's self, and succor man!"

She wept Griselda's patient gain
  Where womanhood itself was lost;
She felt Godiva's shrinking pain
  At all her charity must cost;
Or shared St. Lisabeth's alarms
Who needs must lie to do an alms.

"Ah! well-a-day! if this may be
  What womanhood and wifehood mean,
Then welcome love and chivalry,
  For marriage vows are all unclean
As holy church hath ever said,
In sooth, I never will be wed,

" But take a pilgrim scrip and staff,
  A little lute to comfort me,
The bonny birds they shall not laugh
  When I have found my liberty!
So will I fare and haply find
Largess and grace for womankind."

The little birds they laughed enow,
  For who may change the threads of Fate?
The fire bird for the greenwood bough,
  A lady fair for pomp and state!
Ah! summon now thy guardian Lar
For thou art lost Felicia!

The dream, it was a rope of sand,
  The king he claimed an ancient right
To give his vassal's daughter's hand
  Unto a poor but fav'rite knight.
Coarse was he, though a belted Earl,
Unlettered as a Saxon churl.

Oh! and uprose the lady then,
  Her face it was as white as snow,
The little birds they laughed again
  To see a happy sinner so.
Her violet robe of silken sheen
She took, and dressed her like a queen.

She stepped adown the castle stair,
  —Her face was as the sheeted dead—
The convent bells they rang for prayer,
  They might have rung for death instead!
The tapers on the altar shook
To see the lady's awful look.

The half-sung "gloria" seemed to freeze
  As down she knelt before the shrine,
She clasped the holy prior's knees,
  "Oh! thou whose office is divine,
Whose privilege it is to bless,
Oh! give me back my happiness!"

The prior loved the baron's land,
  The prior loved the baron's gold,
What though a lady's helpless hand,
  What though a woman's heart be sold!
He stooped and said beneath his breath
"Thou shalt be happy after death."

* * * * * *

'Tis ages past, and now she lies
A carven woman on a tomb;
Dust gathers in her stony eyes,
Her hands are lifted in the gloom
With finger tips together pressed
Praying above a stony breast.

But oh! her heart, it is not stone,
Her heart it is a lambent flame!
She left it throbbing here alone,
Forevermore it longs the same!
Still hoary old tradition saith
"Thou shalt be happy after death."
And still a mocking voice afar
Falls as it were a falling star
"Felicia! Felicia!"

POEMS OF SENTIMENT.

SONG. (13)

TUNE "THE OLD GRANITE STATE."

WE'RE a band of æsthetes,
We're a band of æsthetes,
We're a band of æsthetes
From the transcendental state.
And the sunflower is our token,
And our faith will ne'er be broken
To the extacies ne'er spoken
In that trandscendental state.
We're a band of æsthetes,
We're a band of æsthetes,
We're a band of æsthetes
From the transcendental state.

We believe in tall bulrushes,
And in lots of old gold plushes,
And extatic too—too gushes
Of a transcendental kind.
And we like ceramic crazes,
And we swear by art like blazes,
And we join in Oscar's praises,
And we gape and go it blind.

We're a band of æsthetes,
We're a band of æsthetes,
We're a band of æsthetes
From the transcendental state.

We are Oscar Wilde's disciples,
And we live on airy trifles,
And our nat'ral man we stifles
In the transcendental state.
We're "too utterly too utter"
For to eat plain bread and butter,
And with much æsthetic clatter
Serve a lily on a plate.
We're a band of æsthetes,
We're a band of æsthetes,
We're a band of æsthetes
From the transcendental state.

1881.

ON A BACHELOR'S BUTTON.

THERE is a flower, a sweet blue flower,
That blooms amid the ripening corn
When Europe's grain fields wave aloft
To greet the happy harvest morn.

They call it corn-flower, and they love
Its cheerful face amid the stalks:
But here it buttons bachelors
And blooms along the garden walks.

Now ever since the Mayflower sailed,
New England lovers sauntering late
Have loved to haunt the garden paths
And kiss just o'er the garden gate.

The Bouncing Bets and Four O'clocks
And Ragged Sailors, Widow's Tears,
And Bachelor's Buttons hear the kiss
But not one mentions what he hears.

But when gray haired and ill at ease
A bachelor belated woos,
The sweet blue flower takes its right
And tells all passers by the news—

How many a night this awkard elf
Has hung above the garden fence,
And blue and modest like itself
Unpopped, unanswered gone from thence.

Oh! cousin mine, no malice bear!
  But seek some thrifty country yard
And pick the sweet blue flower to wear
  When Hymen ties you good and hard—

And when you bring your good wife home
  And softly button down the latch,
Button your heart with equity
  And love shall dwell beneath your thatch.

THE PLATTER POEM. (14)

ACROSS the many miles that intervene
Betwixt New England and Ann Arbor, green,
A coaxing voice comes on the wings of spring:
"Oh Heavenly Muse! my bran new platter sing!"
Not such as served the gods when round their board
Hebe the platter bore, the nectar poured,
But Haviland's, whose arts the high gods tire
Since old Prometheus stole the hidden fire.
'Twas that which made the god-like Jove so mad;
He knew that fire on earth would make a dish
Finer than any god could dream or wish:
For, though in old Olympus they could dine
On rainbow dishes made of mist-wreaths fine,
They could not use that perfect clay that seems
So like a bubble white as maiden's dreams;
It was impossible for, don't you see,
'Twould be against the laws of gravity.
And, let me in parenthesis here state,
I never blamed old Zeus, his anger great,
For since that time where'er his lightnings roll
Men catch them on a telegraphic pole,
Or bottle them in funny Leyden jars
And laugh at Father Jove among his stars.
So Haviland (which should be Have-I-clay)
Knew how to make this platter here to-day.
'Twas all because Prometheus found him napping
That Yankee fire to-day Greek fire is capping.

If you go far enough to plain perceive all
You'll find that everything is thus primeval.
Sing, Heavenly Muse, the Platter! Shall I tell
Of Odin's warriors when they fought and fell?
How in Valhalla's halls the platter passed
With boar immortal, warranted to last?
Or shall I tell of potentates unmythical,
Of olden housekeepers' stories, wherewith I gull
Your too-believing souls, and say they ate
Forgotten dainties from a pewter plate?
Comfits and cates, pasties and candied tarts
And kept their platters cleaner than their hearts?
Or Christmas pudding on a brandied platter
Brought in afire, amid a mighty clatter,
The prettiest woman holding it aloft
While all the knights their pluméd helmets doffed?
'Twas almost equal to the muss they fell in
When long ago Paris selected Helen—
And, if we put the self-same vote to-day,
This company would vote no other way! (15)
But nearer home I sing the shining dresser
Of sweet Priscilla Alden, (heaven bless her)!
When John sat down to eat his little dinner
That pewter platter shone—the little sinner—
I haven't any doubt that it was so
Although she never used Sapolio.
Sing, Heavenly Muse! New England's dressers clean
With pewter plates and Holland delf between!
Not all that modern art with wealth supplies
Can hide its beauties from our misty eyes;
The shining rows, the sanded floor above,
The homely mess dished up with lots of love,

"A good boiled dish," they called it long ago;
A hunk of meat the shining platters show
Garnished with vegetables, on the verge,
Whose savory smells the healthy diners urge.
New England! oh! my country ne'er forgot!
If in thy sacred realm there be a spot
Dearer than any other, 'tis the one
We call the kitchen, where the work's all done!
I love thy shining tins, thy platters fair!
But Oh! I want a *maid of all work* there!
The law of Evolution has its due
In platters and in protoplasm too;
Look at the platter, object of my rhyme,
A platter foremost in the files of time!
All other platters but led up to this—
And how appropriate its legend is!
A clam-shell, emblem of that little state,
Old Massachusetts never *would* call great,
Because her emblematic cod-fish ball
Beside the clam was just nowhere at all!
'Twas Daniel Webster that was heard to say,
As once he fished in Narragansett bay,
Holding for bait the bivalve, with a sigh,
"Rhode Island, de profundis clam have I!" (16)
An artist fair, to leave no more to wish,
Traced finest bivalve on the finest dish,
And Fate, that proper things should be allied,
Sent it to honor a Rhode Island bride.
It makes me think of one old story told
By Dr. Lord of Rome's great age of gold,
When round the feast reclined and crowned with flowers,

Their day of luxury resembled ours.
Long since forgot their old ceramic arts,
But still one miracle delights our hearts—
Their mammoth platters, large enough to hold
The whole round feast upon their surface bold.
Pictured upon the edge was every sign
Of the old Zodiac, each in proper line;
Aries the ram, Taurus the bull, and so
Gemini, Cancer,—you know how they go—
Leo and all the rest, and Pisces last,
Around the edge in bright procession passed.
On every sign they placed the proper food—
Mutton on Aries, beef on Taurus stood!
And all the rest as Fancy might direct—
Some little twins of beast or bird elect,
Or baby lion, haply made of paste,
Or virgin deer in honey dew encased.
So does *your* platter make me think of that
Round which the haughty, mighty Roman sat,
Because you have two of these Zodiac signs
Among this platters most unique designs;
Pisces the fish, and shell fish are the best—
Although Rhode Island clams no Roman guest,
Then (shall I say it) in their modest grace,
As if they blushed to figure on its face,
Upon the platters back five virgins show
Their wise initials, in a vestal row.
Pisces and Virgo, all that time has left
To us poor moderns of their art bereft!
Yet who, if they *must* choose from all the rest
Would not be satisfied that these are best—

Rhode Island clams and fair Rhode Island girls?
Oh! Dr. Lord, amid life's weary whirls,
I would that I could show your Roman soul
How our Rhode Island platter caps the whole!
1890.

PROPHECY.

WHEN bosky woods are pink with May,
The oriole trills his hearty lay
  I love to hear it.
So like a thing of air he'll float,
So gladsome is his mellow note
That ever from his orange throat,
  Pipes "cheer it! cheer it!"

Oh, fire-bird! ease my lover's pains,
Thou whom all passion redly stains,
  Thou fiery spirit,
Say, what will lovely Mary do
With my fond heart, so leal and true?
The oriole piped as if he knew
  She'll "cheer it! cheer it!"

Thou lovest round her door to flit,
Or on the elm tree swinging sit,
  And hover near it,
What will she do when I shall make
A little home-nest for her sake?
The oriole piped without mistake
  She'll "cheer it! cheer it!"

If sorrow wrap me like a shroud
And Hope's bright face behind the cloud

Should fail to clear it,
If storms should come, and frosts should blight
How would she bear the rayless night?
She'd "cheer it! cheer it!"

Oh, prophet bird! be thou as blest!
Wherever swings thy pensile nest
May love endear it.
And may thy mate as bonny be
As thou hast made my love for me,
Blessing thy home, and helping thee
To "cheer it! cheer it!"

RELIGIOUS POEMS.

THE DYING TEACHER TO HIS WIFE.

THE dying teacher waited,
His faithful wife beside;
To take the long, long journey
On the river deep and wide.
Sweetheart I hear a tolling,
I thought the school was done
But sweet, I must be going,
The school is just begun.
Sweetheart
The school is just begun.

Nay, love, it is no tolling,
Your erring ear allures;
It is the sheep-bell's tinkle
That dies along the moors.
Nay, then, I must be going
For we are shepherds too
And if the shepherds linger
What will the sheepfold do?
Sweetheart,
What will the sheepfold do?

The faithful wife she faltered,
The tears ran down like rain.
Sweetheart, the school is over,
It will never keep again.
Nay, but it seems a tolling,
Though it grows as dark as night,
But I'll wait until the morning,
I'll wait until its light.
Sweetheart,
I'll wait until its light.

* * * * * *

Dear Love as I was dreaming,
The boys were answering "here,"
I thought a great voice called me
And I answered full and clear.
Sweetheart, I hear a tolling
You said the school was done,
But sweet, I must be going
For school is just begun.
Sweetheart,
For school is just begun.

THE PROBLEM.

My heart is larger than this meagre age,
  My subtrahend is a soul that will not bend
To selfish lust, nor sell her heritage,
  Not like the world's self-seeking minuend.
I will not trade like these at mammon's mart,
  Nor let my bonded word belie my act.
  I can not solve life's problem—to subtract
One fair, pure soul, although it be but part,
  From million false ones, though they be the whole;
  Wherefore must we sit still and wait, my soul.

Whereat a voice, "O, vain and foolish youth,
  To deem life's actual shames God's possible!
Borrow ten units of His love and truth,
  His treasury of good is always full,
And make thine age larger than thine ideal.
  The future shall repay the debt of grace,
  If not to thee, then to the coming race,
Whose deeds shall make thy dreams and longings real.
  God is not poor, though bankrupt man may doubt,
  Borrow of Him and work thy problem out."

"TWO LOOKS AHEAD."

WHAT wisdom is in common speech,
  Or else it seemeth so.
I asked when I the town would reach,
  And was it far to go?

In rustic phrase she answered me
  (As country born and bred):
"'Tis twice as far as you can see,
  'Tis just two looks ahead."

Oh! City! sought of saint and seer,
  By prophet bards discerned:
How apt the heavenly lesson clear,
  My heart within me burned.

One look, till earth's horizon line
  Reveals the blest abode.
Ah! shame! if faith alone were mine
  To walk the meaner road.

THE GODWARD TIDE.

THE brook runs singing to the sea,
Dear Lord!
Unmindful if the passage be
Through barren moor or daisied lea;
Bent but to broaden till the ocean's breast
Receives it like a mother into rest.

But I, my Father, what am I
Dear God!
No singing stream, a fretful soul
Petitioning to know the whole
While yet unbroadened for Thy Being's sea
I run and run, yet have not come to Thee.

A stream that chafes at every stone,
Dear Lord!
And mourns the nightshade that has grown
Along its brink where might have blown
The wilding rose, the lily and the vine
That grace the bank of happier streams than mine.

Yet I sweep onward not the less,
My God!
To meet Thy Spirit, when the stress
Of Thy eternal tenderness,
Deep-tided, shall compel my quicker flow
Till I, too, sing and broaden as I go.

I can not keep myself from Thee,
My God!
Albeit I fret at Thy decree,
Or halt when Thou art calling me.
I do but rob my soul of Thy deep calms
And the felt touch of Thy eternal arms.

But not forever! nay, not so,
My God!
Though for a space I murmur slow
Through barren moors where nightshades grow;
Not the less sure Thy love shall quicken me
And mine shall broaden till I come to Thee.

THE HEART'S EXCUSE. (17)

O MY angel, sitting white,
  Looking in my Father's face,
Stoop a little from your height,
  Listen from your happy place,
Till I tell you what to say
To our blessèd Lord to-day.

You who patiently and long,
  Have beheld His face for me,
Do you think it very wrong
  I should bring a lesser plea
Than repentant prayer, to win
Pard'ning grace and peace within?

Nay, I think your earnest eyes
  Scanned too long the Father's brow,
Conning Love's deep mysteries,
  Human love to disallow,
Though no heartbreak comes to you
Safe within His happy blue.

Speak! and tell Him all my need,
  How the little child He sent,
All my hungry heart to feed,
  Fills me with supreme content!
How they blame the fond excess
Of my mother-tenderness.

"Love," they say, and sigh the while,
"Jealous is the Lord our God.
Let no idol here beguile
All your heart, and tempt His rod;
Love the child not overmuch,
Lest it wither at His touch."

Is it so? Then plead for me.
Tell Him that I love Him more
Since the baby on my knee
Set me down so near His door.
Can *our* loves His glory dim,
Since by love we honor Him?

Tell Him I am not afraid.
His is but the shepherd's rod.
Never He at strife has made
Mother-love and love of God.
Only through the child I know
All His love would fain bestow!

Keep, meanwhile, the pearly gate
Just ajar, that I may see.
This small hand the while I wait
Covers all of heaven for me,
And these fingers hold the keys
Of its sweetest destinies.

1875.

MY FATHER'S HOUSE.

"A house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

HOME of my God! I bless the loving hand
That built thy arch so fair, so high, so grand;
Up from my daily toil, my wearing strife,
I gaze, rebuked for all my narrow life,
Rebuked like Peter, when, betrayed by me,
My injured Lord looks down reproachfully.
And just beyond, removed a little space,
My pitying Father hides His tender face.

Home of my God! I lift my fevered brow,
And almost *feel* the heavenly blessing now,
As when a child I lay amid the grass,
With eyes upraised to see the shadows pass,
And dreamed that, where the sunlight glimmered through,
'Twas God's eye watching all we think or do,
And so, untutored, in my childish way
Would lift my serious eyes, and softly pray.

Home of my God! That blessed day is past:
My womanhood in other paths is cast,
Too often in the thorns and dust of sin
Where good departs, and evil enters in.
And yet I lift my eyes and dare to pray,
I dare to ask His blessing on my way;

For I was once untempted, undefiled,
And, e'en though sinning, I am still His child.

Home of my God! Blue arch divinely fair,
That spans alike our cursing or our prayer!
The whole earth drops away; I seem to stand
At thy pearl gates, and in thy blessèd land;
No strife or curse obscures my vision now;
The thorny crown drops from my aching brow.
My waiting soul the promised "peace" receives;
And Jesus crowns my head with healing leaves.

My Father's house! Ah! come that happy day
When from my soul the flesh shall drop away!
And I shall stand, safe from all storms or calms,
In the dear shelter of my Father's arms.
Roll back, blue sky! Open your door of light!
Another angel comes in robes of white.
Break, yoke of sin! Ye heavy burdens, fall!
My soul leaps up to meet the homeward call.

1861.

MAGDALEN.

THE Sacrament was spread,
  The mystic wine was poured;
And to my lips I raised the bread,—
  The body of the Lord,—
When to the chancel rail
  A sinful woman came,
Whose furrowed features told the tale
  Of misery and shame.

Passed I the sacred cup?
  Or offered I the bread?
Oh, no! I drew my garments up,
  And shrank away instead.
I said: Why should she come
  Between my Lord and me?
This woman, filthy and undone,
  To break my ecstasy?

O Lord, the hand was *Thine*
  That offered her the bread.
I *felt* the tenderness divine,
  I *knew* the voice which said:
"Lo! my exceeding grace
  Sufficient is for thee";
And, oh! the look upon Thy face
  Will never pass from me.

That look of love intense
  Outran eternal years.
It marked my sister's penitence,
  It counted all her tears.
It seemed to glow and burn,
  As if my Lord would prove
My faithless soul that dared to spurn
  Where *He* had deigned to *love*.

O Christ! as once of old,
  In Simon's banquet hall,
The sinful one her story told,
  And was forgiven *all*,
So be my soul as fair,
  So be my vows as sweet,
As hers who made her flowing hair
  A towel for Thy feet.

No more may I deride
  Where Thou hast once forgiven;
Or seek to read with impious pride,
  The heraldry of heaven.
Nor first nor last shall be
  Where thou dost equal make;
All one in grateful love to Thee,
  All brothers for Thy sake.

1872.

A BLADE OF GRASS.

If you could tell me, little blade of grass,
How God has fed you in this barren mold,
And made your life a joy to all that pass,
I'd wiser be than wisest men of old.

Content to grow in this old hovel's shade,
Where wearing toil and pinching hunger are;
And yet He paints with equal care your blade
And tones the sparkle of the farthest star.

If you could tell me why He chose this place
For you to cheer His poor with vernal green,
I'd fathom more of spiritual grace
Than sainted Fénelon or Augustine.

Sometimes I question, in the dark of doubt,
What is the link between your life and mine,
Assured, if I could find *your* being out,
I'd fathom all His infinite design.

Here for a little space on you I tread,
Then in a little while o'er me you creep,
As if to say, "Hush, child, your doubt and dread!
Leave all the rest to God, and go to sleep."

COMMUNION.

In all the dignity of Godhead there
The Saviour stood. The chosen ones, whose feet
He washed of worldly dust, sat now at meat
And Jesus took the cup and offered prayer.
What glory crowned that heavenly brow with light
As in communion with the one great soul
His clay bound Spirit spurned its weak control,
Losing the finite in the Infinite.
Perchance a vision of that deeper cup
Of mortal death arose before Him then.
The son of man must needs be lifted up,
Propitiation for the sins of men.
Oh, holy love! the Prince of Salem dies,
That in his resurrection *we* may rise.
1858.

TO MARGARET ——

I PLUCKED a Marguerite along the road,
A wayside daisy, smiling in my face,
To cheer the heartbreak of a weary place
Where poor men toiled and had their mean abode.
And then I thought of thee whom God bestowed
To be to many hearts a means of grace;
For like thy namesake flower there was no trace
Of dark or night, where'er thy "*day's eye*" glowed.
Thou lovd'st light and cheer, and cheerd'st thy kind;
So here I lay this little tribute down—
Oh! kindly soul, may'st thou the brightness find
Thine eye desired, in an immortal crown,
And may the daisies spring above thy rest
To tell of Heaven, and our unending quest.

SONG.

THE graves rise green along our path,
A haunting presence fills the air,
A shadowy thought, a hint of wings—
The dead are everywhere.

Then, like Ulysses on the shore,
We pour libations here:
As then the ghosts of those no more
Shall drink — for they are near.

A host of witnesses around,
We almost see each shadowy head,
There is no word that's ever heard
So meaningless as "dead."

Then, like Ulysses on the shore,
We pour libations here:
As then the ghosts of those no more
Shall drink — for they are near.

NOTES.

1. Read at her funeral services.

2. Written at the birth of her eldest daughter.

3. A string of logs joined together by chains, through which the logs pass down the river safely.

4. Written on board the steamer Orizaba, between Santa Barbara and San Francisco, January 12th, 1866, in anticipation of the birth of her first child, who was born in San Francisco, April 2nd, 1866, and died in Orono, Me., January 31st, 1871.

5. "How charming is that ancient and tender custom of the Calabrian peasants who, in the days just before Christmas, go down from their mountains to visit the shrines of the Mother of Christ, and cheer with their wild strains of song till such time as the Holy Babe is born! Surely the winds of Christmas morning might bring us, if not the echo of that music itself, yet some whisper of its spirit — a somewhat sweeter spirit it may be, than that of the revelry which goes on under mistletoe boughs and before the blaze of yule logs."

6. The myth says that Zeus swallowed his wife Metis (or Intelligence) lest the child should be more intelligent than the father.

7. This last stanza was her last, composed only a few days before she died.

8. Sung before Ursula Cotta's home. In common use by Luther's schoolfellows. The refrain was "panem propter Deum," so it was called the bread-song.

9. Suggested by seeing the sandpipers run to and fro before the waves of the Pacific Ocean as they broke on the beach, along which we rode between San Buena Ventura and Santa Barbara, Cal., January 9th, 1866.

10. Many of the minstrels were denied the Communion.

11. During the disputes of the schoolmen, women sat as umpires after the fashion of the tournaments.

12. Save for the death of husbands.

13. This song was composed when the Oscar Wilde craze was at its height, and was sung by a choir of cousins at a birthday festival of one of her uncles. The choir were dressed in white robes with a sunflower as large as a dinner plate attached to the left breast of of each gown. The author acted as chorister, and trained her "band of æsthetes" with an enthusiasm *en rapport* with the occasion.

14. Several friends of a Providence lady joined on the occasion of her marriage in presenting her with a platter, which was decorated with clams

and sea weeds. Mrs. Peckham was set down for some verses, to which she responded as follows: "To-day I have jingled a rhyme, thoroughly impromptu I assure you, and hope it is not too egregious to do you service. When anybody wants to be funny they can't be, you know. I hope it will arrive in time for your *spread*. Don't you think I ought to be there to read it? I am sure I wish I were to be there. Let my ghost sit among you, not like Banquo's, but like one of those invisible Brownies who blessed the farmer's store and kept his milk from souring. It shall be the milk of human kindness in this case."

15. The lady's name is Helen.

16. "De profundis clamavi."

17. Read at her funeral services, and written soon after the birth of her youngest daughter as a protest against Calvanistic doctrine.